



**UNIT I:
Group/
Organizational
Leadership
Skills**

Module 1: The Leader Within You

In exploring the leadership qualities within ourselves, we're thinking about personal abilities — mental and physical. We think about knowledge, skills, time and energy, even attitude and enthusiasm. We think of building leadership capacity, which involves enhancing our abilities, learning to transfer skills from one situation to another, and devoting time to reflection and development of a personal leadership philosophy.

There are varied definitions of leadership. Examples include:

1. The process of using influence to help a group achieve its goals.
2. The beliefs individuals have about what makes effective leaders.
3. The qualities, behaviors, skills and knowledge of people regarded as effective leaders.
4. An influence relationship to help a group achieve mutual goals.

The Challenge of Leadership

As we are all aware, we are living in a time of rapid change. There have always been changes taking place in our society, but the different thing today seems to be the rate of change. It happens so fast that we sometimes feel we can hardly keep up.

This rapid change also leads to feelings of uncertainty. Traditions and customary ways of doing things are threatened. Fear of the unknown sometimes creates a resistance to change. We don't quite know how to proceed.

Apathy or doing nothing is one way this resistance to change is illustrated. Individuals and families are so busy trying to manage their own personal activities that they don't make time for the broader community. They do not realize that group or community action is often the best way to address these new issues.

As you begin to explore "the leader within you," think about ways it may be appropriate for you to revise elements of your style, your priorities, your beliefs and your habits. In particular, ask yourself:

- Am I paying enough attention to the subjective aspects of leadership—including the values, culture and tone in my organization?
- Am I doing all I can to bring out the best in others? Am I valuing and respecting their differences and motivating and inspiring them?
- Am I "walking my talk" and modeling the values I believe in?
- What other leadership actions should I be adding? How am I balancing my focus on results vs. people? My commitment to career vs. my personal life?¹

Today's challenge is to ask:

- Do I share in leadership roles?
- Am I developing my ability to work with others as a team leader and member?
- Am I a lifelong learner, instead of thinking I already know all there is to know?

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Citizen Leadership

Citizen leaders are people in the community who are concerned about the quality of life in their community. They assume responsibility for the public good and see a need to act together for the common good of the community. Citizen leaders take ownership of the problems and opportunities that exist in the community and hold themselves accountable for seeing that action is taken. In other words, they don't want "experts" or politicians to solve the problems for them.^{1,2}

Citizen leaders work with others in the community to identify opportunities or problems. They help others articulate a common purpose and set goals and objectives. They also assume that there are differences in the way people regard the opportunity or problem, i.e., different values of the people, different experiences, different viewpoints.^{1,3} Citizen leaders help people connect their differences to the common purpose which brought them together. In other words, the citizen leader helps people see how their differences can be used to solve problems rather than be a point of conflict. Citizen leaders also acknowledge that problem-solving requires a commitment of time. They realize that people must *gain* as well as *contribute* to the problem-solving process. Leaders also help people find their role in the process and affirm the developmental nature of the relationship.

Consider the Following Trends in Leadership:

Ask yourself, "How do I think about leadership and myself as a leader?" Each one of us has a wide range of skills, interests and abilities which we use in our daily lives—at home with our family—on the job—and in our communities. Some tasks are more meaningful and enjoyable to us than others.

When you are thinking about moving into a leadership position, or a more active role as a group member, think about these questions:

1. What skills do I have to offer?
2. What would I like to learn more about?
3. What is it that I don't like to do?
4. What do I want to do, but am hesitant about?

Think about what motivates you, gets you excited, and makes you feel successful in your leadership roles.

Motivation

Motivating yourself and others is a fundamental leadership ability. Motivation starts from within. As leaders, we make important contributions when we find incentives for ourselves, and when we create an environment which makes it possible for other people to motivate themselves.

As you consider your leadership philosophy and style, ask what can I contribute to my organizations and community — either on or off the job? We need to figure out how to release the leader within and get ourselves up and moving. Motivation is a complex topic. Internal motivation comes from within a person. Understanding and supporting the motivation of the individual group member is vital. Your own enthusiasm and commitment are also crucial to success.

Leaders and managers of groups can provide incentives and set the stage for people to become motivated. Sources of motivation are often divided into five categories.

People who are motivated by the desire for:

ACHIEVEMENT: strive for success in accomplishments, a high level of involvement. They are “do’ers” and like getting projects done.

POWER: aim for having impact or influence in dealing with other people and/or project results, such as fundraisers or working with politicians.

AFFILIATION: like being with others, enjoy mutual friendship, and want to belong to a group. Don’t give them tasks in which they work alone. They like to plan celebrations and social events.

RECOGNITION: desire recognition for work performed and are concerned about status and visibility in the group or community. They enjoy working with the media and making public appearances, and appreciate receiving certificates and having their name in the paper.

ALTRUISM: prefer doing things for the general good or public interest. They enjoy working with other groups who have shared values and goals. They feel a need to pay back something to society.

Many people are motivated by several of these categories. At different stages in your life, one area may be more important than others.



Empowerment

In much of the work that we do—whether for pay or as a volunteer—a group of people with different types of interests and expertise is involved. So, part of leadership includes empowering others.

Empowerment is not just one of today’s buzzwords. In the leadership context, it summarizes some important trends and principles for leadership in today’s society.

For example, it means:

- Getting away from the idea of one leader who has all the answers and who can tell everybody what to do.
- Acknowledging the capability and desirability of different people to influence decisions.
- Accepting the need for and benefits of personal, organizational and community change.
- Accessing information and other resources.
- Transferring power, or enlarging the power base and understanding of all stakeholders; giving and accepting power and responsibility.
- Thinking of power as energy, or the influence or ability to get things done. It is not seen as something negative or coercive.
- Sharing knowledge and interests, as well as a vision and goals.⁴

If the individuals in the leadership roles can foster an environment where everyone can contribute their expertise and leadership skills, then motivation, energy and enthusiasm will follow. A critical part of such an environment is the willingness to *delegate* meaningful tasks—not just gopher or busy work. To delegate means sharing and getting an agreement or commitment from others to accept the job, not just assigning something in a dictatorial way.

This involves a shift from doing and controlling, to an attitude or philosophy of empowering and enabling, and the confidence to share credit as well as work.

Applying Your Leadership Skills

What we are really talking about now is the concept of citizen leadership. So much of good leadership is just being a good citizen, leading by example, and genuinely caring for other people and their concerns. Think about following these seven steps to become a better citizen—thus adding value to your leadership potential:

1. BE A TEAM PLAYER—Actively work with others to “get things done.”
2. BE COURTEOUS—Consult others before decisions are made.
3. ACT CONSTRUCTIVELY—Have a positive attitude and be open to new ideas.
4. BE A GOOD SPORT—Don’t take yourself too seriously, and don’t get overly concerned if things don’t go the way you think they should.
5. BE CONSCIENTIOUS—Be punctual, responsible and don’t procrastinate.
6. CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS OF OTHERS—Compliment others on their accomplishments. As a result, they will likely do the same for you. Share the credit of accomplishments.
7. BELIEVE IN FAIRNESS—Treat others in an honest, straightforward manner, and don’t adopt a double standard.⁵

Viewing the leadership behavior of all members of a group, rather than the authoritative position of one, means seeing leadership as a more complex and subtle

phenomenon that it is often taken to be. Leadership demands within a group—even within the same meeting—may be quite fluid. A group that utilizes the broad range of leadership skills within its membership is a productive, viable organization.

When we define leadership as the process of working with a group to achieve mutual goals, we see that leadership is not possessed by any one individual as exclusive property. Leadership is the group's property.⁶ Group members seek a sense of belonging, participation in making the rules they will be governed by. They want reachable goals, meaningful and challenging responsibilities. They want to be kept informed, to see progress, to feel confident in their leadership. Any individual may assume, acquire or be elected to the leadership position. However, as the situation or group goals change, the requirements of the leadership role may also change. When this happens, another member of the group may better possess the skills and abilities needed—and should become the next leader.

Summary

A broad base of leadership is vital to organizations and communities. There are organizations devoted to almost every purpose imaginable.

Communities of all sizes work to sustain themselves and their residents. Each group must have skilled leadership if it is to achieve its goals with a minimum of wasted effort. There are countless opportunities for leadership. There is great need for shared or participative leadership, which also results in more effective followers—individuals who are committed to the active and substantive involvement essential to attaining group goals. There is a leader within everyone.

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**A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team**

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT I: Personal Leadership Skills

Module 2: Values and Ethics

There are many different approaches to learning about values, ethics, self-esteem and motivation in the context of leadership and followership. Our actions as individuals and group members, as well as our behavior while serving in leadership roles, are based on values. An awareness of what we believe and value, and recognizing the sources of these beliefs and values, is a basic beginning step in developing our personal leadership skills. The topics are closely related to one another.

There is a growing need to find ways to promote ethical behavior, individually and in group situations, without imposing a specific value system. Group decisions, where some individuals or groups benefit while other pay costs, sometimes result in ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas involve a conflict between core ethical values — between “right and right” or between “wrong and wrong.”

Recognize What You Value

Values are abstract concepts of worth — what we think is good or important. They guide the way we feel and act about certain ideas, things, situations, and people. They are principles which guide decisions and actions.

Values are formed through experiences over time. They are influenced by many sources — including parents, siblings, friends, teachers, religions, organizations, the media and many other factors.

A value in itself is neither good nor bad. We are influenced every day by our values. Values can and do change. We are often aware of some values, but others that have been learned at an early age may not be easily recognized.¹

The feelings and attitudes that we have about the relative worth or importance of things make up our values. The things we value may be material possessions, such as clothing, property or automobiles; the activities that we enjoy, such as sports, music, our work; the people we care about, such as our family or friends. We also value or hold dear certain ideals, principles or beliefs.

Types of Values

A personal system of values is made up of all the things that a person prizes, cherishes, holds dear, or considers important.² There are many different types of values. Among the different types of values are:

Moral Values. What is good or right behavior? What is just? What thoughts, ideals, attitudes or beliefs are noble and worthy?

Spiritual Values. What are the best ways to worship? What is the spiritual or religious way that is most meaningful to you?

Aesthetical Values. What types of things are beautiful, harmonious or pleasing to you?

Sensual Values. What kinds of experiences make you feel good or give you a sense of pleasure or of well-being?

Prestige Values. What brings you worth or esteem in the eyes of others? What is “in” or fashionable or respectable? What gets you the kind of attention or respect from others that you want or need?

Economic Values. What is most important to you in the way of earning or acquiring money, your standard of living, or your financial security?

Pragmatic Values. What are the things that you feel are practical and useful?

These various types of values are related. They overlap. It is difficult to consider one type without involving one or more of the others. In many situations involving leadership and diversity, it is useful to make a distinction between moral values and ethical values (see p. 8)

Values have varying degrees of strength. Each individual has a kind of “pyramid of values.” Some values are much higher in degree of importance than others. They take priority. Some people may value most highly things that they feel are practical for everyday use. Others may cherish works of art or things of beauty.

How do you make “good” decisions? First, know what you truly value. Values are not just “interests” or “feelings” or even “preferences.” They involve three important factors: choosing, prizing, and acting. Before something can be a genuine value (and part of your decision-making and action processes), it must meet seven basic criteria.²

³ It must be:

1. Chosen freely (without external pressure or coercion).
2. Chosen from among alternatives (all possible options).
3. Chosen after careful reflection (advantages, disadvantages, consequences).
4. Prized and cherished.
5. Publicly affirmed.
6. Acted upon (applied to specific situations).
7. Part of a repeated pattern of action in your life (commitment).

Once a value has met all these sometimes demanding criteria, it is yours, a part of who you are. If it is to be changed, it can only be changed by you, nobody else.

Some thoughtful reflection about ourselves in relation to our values can often help us place our values in a truer focus. This process can:

- Help us know ourselves better.
- Become a guide for self-improvement.
- Be helpful in making personal decisions.
- Help us manage our time, energy and resources to our best advantage.
- Help us to eliminate some of the confusion in our lives.
- Help us to formulate a desired system of values.
- Help us to act or behave more in accordance with our desired system of values.
- Help us to better understand and respect others who have different values.

A firm self-identity — who we are or who we would like to be — is fundamental to effective leadership. We live in rapidly changing times. We live at a fast, and often hectic, pace. We are besieged and bombarded from all sides by various pressures that are trying to influence or determine our values. We cope daily with many different “pushes” and “pulls” that presume to tell us what is “right” or “best” for us. If we want to have a clear self-identity and a system of values that we can call our own, we have to take control — make some choices, clarify and establish our own system of values.

Values and Goals

We generally think the same things are important over time, although the order of importance may change. Resources, experiences, family situations, and the environment influence what we value.

Values and goals are closely related. Values are the “why’s” behind our goals. For example, your goal might be to plant a big hedge around your yard. The “why” behind this goal is that you value privacy. If your goal is to be president of a local service club, your values might be recognition (social acceptance), service to others or power.

If you value individuality, your goals will be different than if you value conformity.

People can share goals without sharing values. We can also share values without sharing goals. Attention to these differences becomes important in group communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution.¹

Match Values and Goals With Time Use

Working in the leadership field is a “labor intensive” activity. We need to practice our time management skills to do it well. Time is the most valuable, unique, and perishable of the resources we use. The more you become aware of time and how you use it, the more precious it becomes. Time is the scarcest resource we have, and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed.

Time management is actually a misnomer. One does not really manage time, for the clock is out of our control. Time management is really a matter of managing yourself with respect to the clock, not managing the clock or time.

In order to use your time, and other resources effectively, you must first think about your values and decide on your goals. Personal, professional, social, family, and financial goals are all important — all require time in which to achieve them. Most of us want to work toward more than one goal. This makes it necessary to set priorities and to balance our use of resources among competing demands. Think through and decide what is more important to you than other possibilities. After deciding what your goals are, write them down. Otherwise, your goals may remain unclear and you’ll never know whether you’ve achieved them.

Effectiveness means selecting the most important task from all the possibilities available and then doing it. Making the choices about how you’ll use your time is more important than doing efficiently whatever job happens to be around. Efficiency is fine in its place — after the effective goal has been selected.

Select activities that will help you accomplish your goals. Realizing that you can’t do everything all at one time, you may want to divide large, long-term projects into a series of short-term projects that can be completed one by one in more manageable periods of time. Many smaller steps, or short-term objectives, are a priority to meeting deadlines for this series of short-run tasks. Otherwise, time is frittered away and no progress is made.

Think about WHY you want to improve your organization and management skills and/or improve the way you balance time, money, and other resources. Is your goal to find the time to become a volunteer on a community project? Do you feel “stressed out” or overwhelmed by all the things you have to do? Is leisure time something you only dimly remember from your childhood?

In working with other people, it is important to be aware of their values as well as our own. It is easier to get along with people who see the world as we do, so we often seek them out. But in leadership work, we need the ideas of others who see the world differently and have feelings about situations that are different from ours. It takes time to bridge some of these differences, but we will benefit from their expertise in dealing with organizational and community problems.⁴

When we work toward understanding different values, we get closer to building common ground. When we are tolerant of others' beliefs, it is easier to develop working relationships and a solid base for accomplishing mutual goals.

Respect and tolerance for the values of others is an important attitude in human relationships. Before we can understand someone else, we must understand ourselves. Knowing what makes us behave the way we do helps us choose how to act in order to be more effective in working with others.

Self-Esteem

Values are closely related to one's sense of self-esteem. Self-esteem is earned through thought, action and reflection. Self-esteem can be defined as one's own, realistic, positive inner valuing of oneself based on genuine striving to become a more capable and worthy person.⁵ In this definition, self-esteem includes three key components, which include feelings of being:

- *Capable*. One's practical ability and competence, which is different for everyone.
- *Worthy*. One's ability to act in a manner that is consistent with principles such as honor, honesty, morality and justice — dimensions which relate to character.
- *Striving*. The effort to be the best one can be, which is under an individual's control.

In the Teel model, four key points put these principles into action:

- Turning errors into positive learning experiences, allow us to grow and become better, stronger, happier and more fulfilled.
- Maintaining self-control, but recognizing and properly using the differing roles of emotion and reason.
- Gaining responsibility, striving to fulfill the things in our lives for which we are responsible — which involves distinguishing between those which are our responsibilities and those which are not.
- Respecting the rights of ourselves and others, seeking to act in accordance with principles which give equal respect and weight to one's own rights and to the rights of all others.⁵

Another version of self-esteem, developed by Hesselbein, has a focus on leadership in the information age. It is based on six categories called the Six Pillars of Self-Esteem.⁶ They include:

1. The practice of living consciously.
 - Respect for facts.
 - Being present in what we are doing while we are doing it.

- Seeking and being eagerly open to any information, knowledge or feedback that bears on our interests, values, goals and projects.
 - Seeking to understand not only the world external to us, but also to our inner world, so that we do not act out of self-blindness.
2. The practice of self-acceptance.
 - Willingness to own, experience and take responsibility for our thoughts, feelings and actions — without evasion, denial or disowning and without self-repudiation.
 - Giving ourselves permission to think our thoughts, experience our emotions, and look at our actions without necessarily liking, endorsing or condoning them.
 3. The practice of self-responsibility.
 - Realizing that we are the authors of our choices and actions.
 - Each one of us is responsible for our life and well-being and for the attainment of our goals.
 - If we need the cooperation of other people to achieve our goals, we must offer value in exchange.
 - The question is not, “Who’s to blame?” but always, “What needs to be done?”
 4. The practice of self-assertiveness.
 - Being authentic in our dealings with others.
 - Treating our values and other people with decent respect in social contexts.
 - Refusing to fake the reality of who we are or what we esteem in order to avoid someone’s disapproval.
 - Being willing to stand up for ourselves and our ideas in an appropriate way and in appropriate circumstances.
 5. The practice of living purposely.
 - Identifying our short-term and long-term goals or purposes and the actions needed to attain them.
 - Organizing behavior in the service of these goals.
 - Monitoring actions to be sure we stay on track.
 - Paying attention to the outcome in order to recognize if and when we need to go back to the drawing board.
 6. The practice of personal integrity.
 - Living with congruence between what we know, what we profess, and what we do.
 - Telling the truth, honoring our commitments, and exemplifying in action the values we profess.
 - Dealing with others fairly and benevolently.⁶

Although these have several parallels, the self-esteem pillars should not be confused with the Six Pillars of Character, the basis of the Josephson Model for Ethical Behavior, which is described on the next page.⁷

Building a Framework for Dialogue

Enhancing ethical decisions and actions, without imposing a pre-conceived set of values and beliefs, is fundamental to ethical leadership and decision-making. A dialogue about ethical principles is of vital importance in empowering action on critical issues, which often involve conflicts of values and opinions which cannot be determined by objective, factual data.^{8,9,10} One challenge of collaborative leadership is to develop a firm foundation of ethical behavior in order to meet the needs of participating groups and achieve mutual goals.

In order to think clearly and communicate effectively about differences in value systems and ethical issues and decisions, and to develop practical approaches for dealing with ethical problems, it's essential to develop a plain, understandable vocabulary. One way is by considering the definitions.

- Ethics refers to standards of conduct that indicate how people ought to behave, based on values and principles about what is right. Ethics deals with the ability to distinguish right from wrong and the commitment to do what is right.
- Values and ethics are not the same. Ethics is concerned with how a person should behave, in contrast to values that concern the beliefs and attitudes which determine how a person actually behaves. People hold both ethical and non-ethical values. Ethical values are values that relate directly to beliefs about what is right and proper.

Discussions about ethics often get bogged down in debates about relative ethics, situational ethics or personal ethics. These debates often are based on confusion over what certain people or cultures actually do, in contrast to the more important question of what people should do.

Historically, there is no significant difference between the terms ethics and morality. However, today the term morals tends to be associated with a narrower and more personal concept of values. Morals usually refer to an individual's belief about what is right and wrong, especially concerning matters such as religion, sex, drinking, gambling, borrowing money or business practices.

Six Pillars of Character

Several models or frameworks of ethical behavior have been developed. One approach that is useful in many leadership, as well as personal situations is based on these six pillars of character.⁷

Ethical people practice the following pillars of ethical behavior in everyday life, as well as community activities or the workplace. The Six Pillars and resulting actions include:

1. Trustworthiness

Honesty:

Tell the truth.

Be sincere — say what you mean, mean what you say.

Integrity and Courage:

Stand up for your beliefs about right and wrong. Be yourself, resist social pressures to do the things you think are wrong.

Show commitment, courage and self-discipline by doing the right thing, regardless of personal cost.

Promise-keeping:

Be reliable and keep your word.

Only make commitments you firmly intend to keep.

Fidelity and Loyalty:

Keep confidential information confidential.

Within the limits of your other ethical obligations, be loyal — stand by, support, help, and protect your family, friends, teachers, employers, school, community and country.

2. Respect

Treat people with respect — be courteous and polite.

Respect the right of individuals to make decisions about their own lives.

Be tolerant, appreciative, and accepting of individual differences.

Judge all people on their own merit.

3. Responsibility

Accountability:

Think before you act — consider the possible consequences to yourself and others, and decide whether the act is honest, fair, caring and respectful to all who will be affected.

Be accountable — accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions and inactions.

Be reliable; perform your duties.

Set a good example with your own conduct.

Take the initiative to make your society, school, or home life better for yourself and others.

Pursuit of Excellence:

Do your best. Make everything you do worthy of your pride.

Persevere. Meet your responsibilities even when it is difficult to do so.

4. Fairness

Treat all people fairly.

Be open-minded. Listen to others and try to understand what they are saying and feeling.

Make decisions with impartiality, based on consistent and appropriate standards.

5. Caring

Show that you care about others through kindness, caring, generosity, sharing and compassion.

Treat others the way you want them to treat you.

6. Citizenship

Obey laws and rules.

Do your share.

Stay informed, vote, and protect your family and community.

Be charitable and altruistic.

Types of Values

Everyone has hundreds of values, ethical and non-ethical. Ethical values are concerned with beliefs about what is right — such as honesty, respect, caring and responsibility.

Two Categories of Ethical Values

Core ethical values are ethical values which are fundamental, regardless of most cultural, socio-economic and ethnic differences. The concept of core ethical values was developed through consensus by a group of educators, leaders of youth and human services organizations, and ethics institutes.

This new conceptual framework proposes two categories of ethical values. Core ethical values are generally accepted as fundamental, regardless of time, culture or religion.^{7,8} These include: trustworthiness, respect, caring, responsibility, fairness, and citizenship.

A second category of ethical values includes cultural and personal ethical values. This category includes beliefs about what is right and wrong that arise from religious beliefs, cultural traditions, political philosophy, and business or professional standards and practices.

These non-core ethical values do vary over time and among different professions, cultures, religions and individuals. They are areas of legitimate controversy among people with differing values. The core ethical value of respect requires tolerance and dignity for the autonomy of every individual and their right to their own beliefs.

Non-ethical values relate to things we like, want, or deem personally important — such as wealth, fame, job security, recognition, professional success, and satisfying social relationships. These values are ethically neutral. Do not confuse them with unethical values.

Personal ethics is a term sometimes used to describe an individual's value system and code of behavior, based on a variety of values and beliefs. Personal ethics can (erroneously) find that the actions of the Mafia, a youth gang or a dictator are ethically the same as those of Mother Teresa. Some types of leadership principles make a distinction between the necessity for ethical behavior in one's private life and in one's public life.

Ethical behavior sometimes costs more than we wish to pay. Many excuses and rationalizations are created to explain why we opted for convenience, comfort and self-interest instead of doing what we know is right.

An ethical dilemma occurs when there is a conflict between core ethical values, between “right and right” or between “wrong and wrong.”

Ethical Motivation in Leadership

Ethical behavior in leadership roles is based on the concept of working with others to accomplish agreed upon goals for the common good. A basic premise is that people have unique strengths and the capacity to resolve their own issues. Personal, selfish interests, manipulation of others and similar actions are not part of ethical leadership.

Motivational leadership is guidance that stimulates others into voluntary action. Such leadership takes responsibility for moving others to action so there are actually outcomes. The focus is on the leader's ability to work with, through, and together with others to get results.⁵

It envisions working with voluntary followers to get desirable outcomes, uses group goals to set direction, and specifies objectives against which to determine future achievement. Most of all, it generates the energy to produce effects.

Questions to Ask Yourself

One major challenge for each of us is how to connect our hopes and dreams for our organizations and communities to our daily actions? How do we engage ourselves and others into “authentic” actions — actions which are meaningful? How do we connect new ways of thinking about leadership with the actual situations we face? Each of us may need to ask ourselves:

- Can I collaborate with others and not be defensive over my own “turf”?
- Can I trust others when I've been betrayed in the past?
- Can I share power while I am trying to build a career and name for myself?
- Can I keep a healthy ego while working with people who disagree with me?
- Do I have the courage to initiate needed changes and risk being criticized by others?⁴

Summary

As leaders, we must find the courage to act upon our values in a positive way. Members must feel comfortable expressing their needs as well as their interests and talents. Satisfying basic human needs for security and acceptance builds trust. In turn, building trust contributes to the expression of needs. Trust is based on the belief that those in leadership roles act ethically, for the common good. Where there are conflicts and dilemmas, care will be taken to think through the alternatives and work together for the most satisfactory solution.

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A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT I: Personal Leadership Skills

Module 3: Strengths and Style

Leadership styles have commonly been labeled “autocratic” or “democratic” to distinguish between the degrees of control/power a leader exercises over the group and to describe to what extent the group participates in making decisions. More recently “task” and “relationship” behavior as two important components of leadership styles, particularly in community and volunteer organizations, have been recognized.

Effective leadership assessment involves the group’s style and stage of development first, and then uses a matching leadership style. If the style of the leader and the needs of the group are mismatched, the group will be unproductive. Leaders also need to adapt their style to the urgency of the task to be accomplished.

TASK BEHAVIOR: oriented towards goals, accomplishments, and organization process.

RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIOR: oriented towards creating the social climate of emotional and psychological support in the relationship with group members.

Leadership styles usually combine some of each behavior in varying amounts. Leadership styles need to be varied for leadership to be effective. This means that we need to cultivate a range of supporting styles and become flexible in using them. Not only is this true when we work with groups at various stages of group development, but also when we move from one culture to another.

Individuals have a fundamental style or behavior pattern that is their preferred method for learning, for participating, and in working with others. Knowing your own style helps you understand yourself better and also helps you identify times when using a different style would be more effective.¹

True Colors

“True Colors” provides motivational training and education to the field of teaching, learning and leadership. “True Colors” trainings and programs are based on the principles of Myers-Briggs and the work of David Keirsey, plus additional research conducted on the preferences of different personality groups. “True Colors” translates a complex theory of personality types into a language we all can understand easily.²

This approach uses a series of questions about personal preferences in dealing with people and situations. Personality types are categorized as Green, Gold, Blue, and Orange. Everyone has parts of all colors but has a preference for a primary or true color. Insights into learning, problem solving, and interpersonal relationships are gained through this program.

“True Colors” training is offered by certified trainers. Individuals who have participated in “True Colors” training, or in other methods of assessing style and personality, can more readily learn how to draw on their inner strengths to practice activator behavior. It’s important for the leader to be aware of the need for role flexibility, constantly structuring leadership behavior according to:

- Goals of the group
- Membership of the group
- The time the group has in which to accomplish its task

Dealing With Stress

Many leader and follower situations involve some degree of stress, risk and uncertainty. Recognizing one's reactions to these situations helps manage the symptoms and discomfort.³ "Burn-out" often results when personal stress is not effectively managed.

What is Stress?

Stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demand placed on it. Stress can be a:

- Positive motivator
- Physiological response — "Fight or Flight Response"
- Emotional response
- Thinking response
- Behavior.

Most people know what they need to do to reduce stress. The benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise are quite generally known. The real question is why don't most of us do this, especially when we know the costs of a stressful life? It requires a lifestyle change and a sustained effort to make the necessary changes.³ A gradual, step-by-step approach which allows for occasional backsliding has the best chance of succeeding. An effective stress reduction program involves the mind, body and spirit. Some elements to consider incorporating into your lifestyle change include:

- Developing a healthy attitude about control. You are the only person you truly have control over. You can learn to control some of your physical reactions by using deep breathing and relaxation techniques. You can learn to control the self-defeating statements you tell yourself.
- Finding activities that suit your lifestyle. There may be some things you really want to do, but cannot fit into the way you live. Find substitutes. Don't suffer through an exercise routine you hate doing. Explore a variety of activities until you find those you enjoy. Some people prefer exercising alone, while others prefer a partner, group or class.
- Building social supports into your life. Don't isolate yourself from others. Build a network of mutually supportive relationships, rather than relying on just one person.
- Working with people who are different from you. This is a key factor in effective leadership. Working with a variety of people allows more community problems to be addressed, and provides the ability to influence public decisions. Differences in values, attitudes and expertise add strength to group participation and give improved results.
- Cultivating a positive attitude toward your life. Discover and cherish that inner sense of who you are. A personal belief system does not have to be associated with any organized religion, but it does help you understand the flow and purpose of life. It provides a sense that there is a power and goodness larger than just yourself.

Risk and Uncertainty

Risk can be defined as the possibility of danger, harm, pain, or loss resulting from a decision or action. Risk is subjective in the sense that individuals define the levels of risk or uncertainty they face in different ways. What seems like a high risk to one person may seem routine to another. Risks may be categorized as performance or functional risk, financial risk, social risk or physical risk.

Uncertainty is the state or feeling of being in doubt. A person weighing uncertainty and risk is trying to determine the probability or likelihood of a satisfactory or unsatisfactory outcome. Some people try to reduce or avoid risk — while others enjoy the excitement of risk-taking.

One way to manage stress and risk in leadership roles is to remember the ethical principles of respect, caring and valuing others. Ask yourself: what are my psychological contracts?

Psychological contracts are the assumptions and expectations a person has about how others should behave in their relationships. They are unspoken, unwritten, and for the most part, unconscious. Yet, they are a powerful influence because they have to do with emotions, power and other personal needs. The essence of psychological contracts is mutual need and mutual gain. Positive mutual gain is the objective of both parties.

Because of the differences in our backgrounds, we bring different assumptions and expectations to the community. This can make negotiating mutually satisfying contracts complex. In addition, the psychological contracts we formed early in our lives will have changed over time. Psychological contracts are dynamic and changing as people and organizations change.

In order to promote an appreciation of individual worth and diversity, remember to:

- Treat everyone as an individual.
- Deal with conflicts and disagreements early on.
- Promote interpersonal communication.
- Set clear expectations and goals.
- State a common vision.
- Be a positive role model.³

Selecting a Leadership Style

Assessing one's own strengths and styles can enhance your leadership skills. The goal of the effective leader is to have leadership flexibility — but this does not mean permissiveness. A good leader knows how to involve people by structuring their ideas toward task accomplishment. An effective leader must also be adept at assessing the situation and choosing the most appropriate leadership role.⁴

A leader who learns how to involve other people, listens to their ideas, and learns how structuring ideas will lead to a common goal has learned the advantages and the skills of being a flexible activator. Rigid, passive or unstructured leadership results in organizational problems. The leader who knows when to involve, when to abdicate, and when to control is able to “read” a leadership situation and is able to meet its particular needs.

One interesting framework is based on these leadership styles: the activator, controller, martyr, cavalier, and abdicator. For example, suppose a group is working at a normal pace on a project under activator leadership. Then suddenly, for some reason,

a speed up in work is required. There is no time to obtain group consensus about what to do — the leader may have to become a controller for awhile in order to meet the new deadline. When the deadline is met, cavalier celebration may result!

The leader's role affects personal behavior according to the particular role or roles used. However, his or her role also has a great deal of control over modeling the behavior of the rest of the group. For example, an activator will encourage group members to become active participants. A rigid controller, who frowns on members when they give opinions, can effectively squelch most group involvement.

The Activator

Role: The activator plays a role which involves others and contributes to the group's ability to solve problems. Active and flexible in structuring group behavior, the activator tries to get everyone to participate. Through decision-making processes and operating on the principle that "people support what they help create," members are helped to structure ideas and solidify group decisions. These actions produce a more creative and productive organization.

Behavior: The activator initiates, stimulates and involves groups by putting them at ease and involving them in the decision-making process. Then by being an active listener, he or she can assimilate the ideas into a workable form and reinforce the process with recognition, support and approval. Finally, the activator solidifies the decision by reviewing what has been said and confirming the group's decision.

Appropriate when: Most volunteer organizations and community groups prefer the activator form of leadership.

Cautions: The most likely conflict will be a productive kind — people disagreeing over the right course of action to take. This doesn't mean that conflict won't exist, but it can be more easily resolved because of how the leader operates.

In absence: When the activator leaves, people tend to continue productive activity. Because they are involved in decision-making, their work continues and remains important and challenging to them. For the most part, people support what they help create.

The Controller

Role: The controller is a rigid leader who applies power and tries to frighten the group into action. The controller tells group members what to do because of his or her belief that creativity is rare and that people are lazy and need strong direction.

Behavior: The controller regiments others by hiding goals, controlling information, making piecemeal assignments, and isolating functions and people. With all control, the leader appears as a constant judge. People are threatened by the power of the leader. Often rewards or punishments will be given in front of peers, which creates tension and rivalry.

Appropriate When: It may be appropriate for the leader to act as a controller in emergency situations (when prompt action is imperative). This might occur during an emergency, such as a fire or weather emergency, or in less extreme but realistic situations such as when a deadline is at hand and immediate decisions and actions are needed. This often occurs when preparing a grant proposal, when changes in an agenda must be made due to a speaker cancellation, or when there is a situation in which no one has relevant experience and someone must decide to try to do something.

Cautions: When the leader is a controller, it is fairly easy to see that tension and conflict may result. Very few people like to be told what to do. This situation can lead to an outright rebellion, or group members will conform to the controller’s wishes and rationalize the authoritarianism. If they do this, they will blame the system rather than the controller.

In absence: When the controller leaves, activity is likely to stop. Group members tend to laugh and play, and may even post a “lookout.” They take advantage of their release from the strict supervision, but when the controller returns, horseplay ceases and group members return to serious business again.

The Martyr

Role: The martyr uses behavior that makes people feel guilty, which results in pity. Operating with a guilt-producing role, the martyr tries to impose personal values and policy on everyone. Support from group members is sought by making them feel guilty if they violate the group’s norms or if they are disloyal.

Behavior: The martyr enforces the norms by reminding colleagues of what is expected in the group — that policy is the iron law of an organization. This leader considers any behavior inconsistent with policy to be disloyal. The martyr always carries the biggest burden — feeling personally overworked. This leader thinks others will feel compelled to help in order to make the leader’s work easier. This leader constantly seeks pity from others.

Appropriate when: The martyr does get the work done — slowly, steadily and reliably. Within limits, the martyr can make a contribution by focusing on tasks that need to be done. This leader needs help in teamwork, delegating and maintaining a positive attitude.

Cautions: The martyr is a master at creating an atmosphere of impending doom — telling the group a project will fail if they don’t pull together. This leader uses the internal conflict produced under these circumstances. There is often “scapegoating” under martyr leadership. Not wanting to admit they have let the martyr down, group members will often blame each other for their own shortcomings. The scapegoating, or passing the blame, is likely to erupt into open conflict. Further, if this role is overplayed, group members will feel less and less pity, and will do less and less for the group as a result.

In absence: When the martyr leaves, the activity is likely to change, depending on the level of group guilt. If the level is low, productivity will decline and the group will participate in other activities. If the guilt level is high, the group may respond in one of two ways: First, activity may increase as a means of relieving guilt, or second, members may become cavalier in order to relieve tension. In the last case, work is ignored.

The Cavalier

Role: The cavalier views the leadership role as a provider of pleasure. Seeking to entertain the group, this leader is extremely permissive and too flexible. Anything goes with the cavalier, who wants the group to feel relaxed and free. At times, this role is so permissive that tasks are not accomplished.

Behavior: The cavalier “turns on the charm,” constantly entertaining the group both formally and informally. The leader serves as “chair of the entertainment

committee.” The only thing really structured is the fun and parties. This leader tends to refrain from passing judgment on members or their work. Approval is given through gestures and speech. At the same time, group approval is sought with a constant need to be patted on the back and told of the fine job being done.

Appropriate when: Again, within limits, a group benefits when the leader makes time for socialization and celebration of accomplishments. Particularly with people who work together over long periods of time, paying attention to positive interpersonal relationships and step-by-step accomplishments contributes to motivation and enthusiasm.

Cautions: The cavalier is just the opposite of the martyr — not wanting to deliberately create conflict situations. This leader’s main purpose is to make the group as fun-loving and conflict-free as possible. He or she does not want any trouble, just a good time. For certain members, the constant pursuit of “a good time” causes frustration. They feel non-productive if the group never has a real accomplishment. The cavalier’s inability to lead the group toward substantive goals often triggers conflict.

In absence: When the cavalier leaves, the group may speed up the fun and games or they may become more productive. If they like the leader, they may decide to increase productivity so the leader will not be replaced by some other type. Productive activity may also occur if the group is concerned about the lack of accomplishment when the cavalier is present, but the group may still not want a replacement.

The Abdicator

Role: The abdicator leaves the group on its own, waiting for group advice. This leader plays the withdrawal role, seeking to avoid difficult situations, both mentally and physically. The abdicator may become busy with minor details when a major problem exists.

Behavior: An abdicator constantly postpones action. Often this creates busy work, directing leader and group attention toward minutiae, away from the real crisis. The responsibility is shifted to someone else’s shoulders by missing meetings which forces others to make decisions. If things go wrong or a bad decision is made, the abdicator can then blame someone else.

Appropriate when: The abdicator method may be a useful strategy when a group gets too dependent on the leader and does not take responsibility for the total group actions. Sometimes the group may need to brainstorm ideas for themselves, and then proceed to set goals and prioritize on their own initiative, so that people really take ownership and follow through with actions.

Cautions: The abdicator is a leader who causes conflict by not doing anything. This leader may be with the group physically, but does not lead them. If the group’s security is threatened long enough, conflict is generated when group members seek scapegoats for the lack of accomplishment, direction and order.

In absence: When the abdicator leaves, it is not likely to have much effect on performance, because the leader was “absent” to start with. Under these conditions, productivity largely depends on individual commitment and on the presence of a natural leader who fills the leadership vacuum.

Flexibility in Roles

Knowing how to be flexible, the activator can structure behavior to serve effectively in any organization; knowing when to control to get something quickly done; when to cavalier in order to relieve tension; how to martyr and use guilt; and how to avoid making a decision when it would be more profitable for the group to make it. The activator knows how to change leadership roles in fitting the scene — and above all, knows how to involve the whole group in decision-making to create a productive, cooperating team.

The community organization worker who is an activator has assumed a role that calls for flexibility and creativity, and is a team leader primarily concerned with group productivity. Since the majority of groups are formed in order to solve problems or complete tasks, we have defined the five leadership roles in terms of how they affect group performance.⁴

Many other methods and models for examining leadership styles and managing stress can be useful. It is important to find a way that suits you.

Summary

A leader has a big role to play in a group and must understand the interaction process taking place by being quick to assess the group's leadership needs, and being flexible enough to play the needed roles. Authentic leadership, based on ethical principles, requires balancing of tasks and relationships in a group without adopting artificial or manipulative roles.

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A project of the
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Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
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Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT II: Interpersonal Leadership Skills

Module 1: Building Trust

There are two parts to trust: an intangible, “feeling” part and a performance record that confirms this trust. An active feeling of trust is confidence in leadership, indicated in ability and integrity. Trust is also expressed by the absence of worry or suspicion. Our most productive relationships are already based on trust, sometimes unrecognized and frequently taken for granted. The track record is a confirmation of well-placed trust.

Trust is a vital ingredient in all relationships we develop during our lives. If we find it hard to trust someone, we are less likely to talk to them. But, if someone trusts us and we trust them, then we can develop a good relationship with open communication and fewer arguments. It’s the feeling of safeness you have with another human being.¹

How Does Trust Develop?

Many scholars have created lists of the characteristics of leaders. Trust always makes the list. Trust develops as the cumulative effect of one-on-one, day-to-day relationships. Trust is won or lost by how well you know yourself, how open you are to letting others see your real self, and how well you show your interest in others. These personal actions depend on you as an individual, regardless of the organization, committee, or other group.⁸

An interesting metaphor for trust is to think of it as an emotional bank account. If I make deposits with you through courtesy, kindness, honesty and promise keeping, I build up a reserve. Your trust toward me becomes higher, and I can call on that trust when I need to. When the account is high, communication is easy, instant and effective. But, if I show discourtesy, disrespect, threats, or just do not listen, my emotional bank account will become overdrawn. Trust needs continuing deposits. Furthermore, it takes more deposits to outweigh a negative or withdrawal. One guideline is that every negative encounter requires six positive encounters to restore the original level.²

You can show that you are trustworthy by being responsible. Being open and honest with people is very important. In any relationship, it takes time and effort to develop trust, and trust and commitment are closely related. If you trust more, you are willing to commit more. Each person must accept some responsibility.

Following principles of ethical decision making and action are vital to developing and maintaining trust among leaders and followers.

Perceptions of Trust

Trust exists only in our minds. Trust depends on individual conduct, but also on how that conduct is perceived. Perceptions are difficult things to agree on. Involved people may try to come to an understanding (if not agreement) about behaviors, perceptions, interpretations and expectations.

There is no guaranteed process to change a trustless group, and there is no specific outcome to measure. However, spending time and attention improving the

trustworthiness of group member relationships is a worthwhile endeavor. Trust is probably the most highly valued group component — it is essential to the processes of influence and collaboration.

Trust builds slowly over time. It takes a long time to build trust, but it only takes a moment or two to lose it.

Self-Disclosure Skills

Skills that bring about trust, clearer communication, and a more productive atmosphere are described as self-disclosing. Following are examples of these types of skills:

Behavior Description: Reporting specific, observable actions of others without adding feelings of attitude, motive traits, or personality characteristics. For example: you might say, “Bill, you have been late to our meetings the last three times,” not, “Bill, you sure are disorganized — you’re always late!”

Feeling Description: You describe your own feelings to give a clearer understanding of your emotional reaction. For example: “I feel good about the way that we are working together.” Or, “I feel hurt when you cut me off.”

Ethical Leadership

Leadership is the investment of trust into people who serve the common good. It creates value. It refines and develops services that enrich our lives. Leadership is ethical, but what does that mean?

The most important attributes of ethical leaders that are consistent across age, gender and sector are that leaders:

- Are committed to the mission.
- Care deeply about those they serve.
- Are competent and work with competent people.
- Are honest and has integrity.
- Acknowledge their own mistakes.

Honesty, fair-mindedness and concern for others are qualities people look for in leaders. If the leaders selected do not serve reliably, trust erodes and creates a loss of faith in the leaders and system they work within.^{2,3}

Ethical behavior requires:

1. A high *degree of commitment*, the desire to do the right thing.
2. *Consciousness*, the heightened awareness of the ethical implications of decisions and actions, the claims of all stakeholders, and the tendency to rationalize unethical conduct.
3. Enhanced *competencies*, particularly the ability to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills in dealing with personal, professional and group situations.
4. *Courage*, the ability to face and deal with difficult situations instead of withdrawing or taking the easy way out.

The Six Pillars of Character are one useful guide for ethical leadership. Keep in mind these six core ethical values:

- Trustworthiness (honesty, promise keeping, integrity, loyalty).
- Responsibility (accountability, pursuit of excellence, concern for others).

- Caring (concern for others, minimize harm).
- Respect (courtesy, decency, tolerance, acceptance).
- Justice and fairness (procedural fairness, impartiality, equity).
- Civic virtue and citizenship (community service, doing one’s share, contributing to the overall social good).

You can use different words for these values, and you may have some ideas that don’t quite agree with this formulation, but it is a useful approach to making more ethical decisions. The essential component is to maintain respect for everyone and to avoid doing harm whenever possible.

Traditional Guides For Ethical Behavior

Philosophers and theologians are, and have been for centuries, concerned with the development of theories which describe the nature of moral obligations and which provide guidance in meeting these obligations.^{5,6} Some different approaches to ethical behavior are:

The Golden Rule

The Golden Rule establishes the principle that people should be concerned with and responsible for the well-being of others. They will help others when they can and avoid doing harm whenever possible. “Treat others as you would have them treat you” is the basic premise.

“The Means Justifies the Ends”

This approach says that the ethical character of an action is determined by the principle upon which it was based, rather than on the consequences it produces. In this model, people have an absolute duty to do the “right” thing in all situations. The rules must always be followed. The means, rather than the end result, is critical.

“The Ends Justify the Means”

This approach states that actions are right and good when they produce benefit, and/or prevent harm, pain. In this view, the ethical nature of an act is best determined by the consequences produced, regardless of how the result was obtained.

Various Other Guidelines

Additional ethical standards may be included in or derived from broader religious or moral traditions. Some ethical rules vary from culture to culture, or group to group, and are constantly evolving.

Applying Ethical Principles

One universal tenet, the instruction to “Do No Harm”, is present in most sets of rules. However, in some group or public issues, it is impossible to find a resolution which does no harm to anyone. Shortcomings of each of the traditional theories become particularly apparent in cases where there are many competing interests, values, and benefits. Various ethical standards evolve as individuals or groups become more aware of the consequences of their actions on others or as new abilities or technologies raise new issues.

Making Ethical Decisions

One practical approach for the issues we deal with as leaders and followers is the Six Pillars of Character framework which prioritizes a set of core ethical values as higher than non-core ethical values (which vary across time, religion, culture, or professions), and these in turn rank above nonethical (neutral) values. This approach doesn't provide the answers. It doesn't provide the solution to a controversy. It helps make sure that the right questions are being asked and that the stage is set for people to exchange viewpoints and identify their common interests.

Ethical decision-making refers to the process of evaluating and choosing among alternatives in a manner consistent with ethical principle. It adds specific consideration of ethical principles in making personal and professional and program choices. Ethical behavior requires that leaders and group members work together to:

- Perceive and eliminate unethical options--and when there is a conflict, eliminate options that favor nonethical values over ethical values.
- Select the best ethical alternative.
- When there are more than one ethical responses to a situation, examine the choices carefully because not all may be equal.

These criteria can be added to other criteria for evaluating options and consequences of a group or public policy choices.

Dialogue, reflection, and questioning are needed as we:

- Examine the situation.
- Identify all the important points of conflict.
- Decide whose interests are involved and consider their key values.
- Identify the conflicting loyalties.
- Identify the alternatives and consequences.
- Eliminate any options that are clearly unethical, illegal, or impractical.
- Identify which principles are respected and which are violated in the various options.
- Examine possibilities for combining or rearranging options or look for others.
- Determine the priority of competing values as you weight the options.

The decision should take into account and reflect a concern for the interests and well being of all stakeholders. When ethical values conflict, the decisions should be those that produce the greatest balance of good in the long run.^{6,7}

Dealing with Ethical Dilemmas

An ethical dilemma occurs when there is a conflict between core ethical values, sometimes described as a conflict between “right and right” (when two good choices conflict) or between “wrong and wrong” (the lesser of two evils). Ethical decision-making in situations with complex and difficult ethical dilemmas requires critical thinking. These choices are the tough ones. Leaders who can analyze the conflicting choices in an ethical dilemma and explain their reasoning are leaders who contribute to trusting relationships.

Symptoms of a Trustless Relationship

It is not difficult to know when a lack of trust is impacting either personal relationships or group work. Some of the more common symptoms of trustless relationships are as follows:

Poor Communication: Lack of openness, reluctance to explore concerns, unwillingness to truly listen.

Inflexibility: Members dogmatically sticking to their perceptions and beliefs, even in the face of contrary evidence.

Lack of Respect: Concerns about members' competence, knowledge or motives.

Guarded Information Flow: Excessive control of information and information processes.

Hidden Agendas: Objectives and expectations that are not freely shared with the group.

Avoidance of Conflict: Lack of interpersonal confrontation about legitimate concerns.

Backbiting: Critical discussions of team members behind their backs.

Backstabbing or Sabotage: Attempts to undermine the credibility or success of a team member.

“End-Arounds”: Avoiding or eliminating someone who should legitimately be involved in a decision, request or communication.

Inappropriate Independence: Stubbornly refusing to seek the input of others team members or to work toward consensus.

Poor Follow-Through: Failure to keep commitments or take agreed-upon actions.

Disinterest: Displaying apathy, indifference or inattention in group activities.

Although often very difficult, rebuilding trusting relationships is possible. Careful attention to open communication and ethical behavior is the stepping stone to building and rebuilding trust.

In order to build or rebuild trust, you can:

- Show consistency in the basic values that guide your decision making; take the time to think about your values, beliefs, and personal goals. Articulate them clearly so others can see that you are following a course they can support and share.
- Show respect for old ideas and traditions while you explore new ones. In your leadership roles, you can help people make transitions from the present to the future. This is particularly important during times of rapid change.
- Listen in ways that show you respect others and that you value their ideas. Listen especially for the vision, the context, and different ways of looking at situations.
- Show that you are working for others' interests as well as your own. This does not mean neglecting your own needs and motivations (such as recognition, achievement, the opportunity to use your skills and accept new challenges) as well as your willingness to work toward common goals. People will look at your track record to see if you aim for the overall group benefit or for protecting your personal turf. They will watch to see if you build and help others excel or if you treat everyone else as competitors.
- Practice openness and sharing. Trust is based on perception as well as fact. Share whatever information you have in order to improve the group's work, rather than hoarding it to boost your ego. People also need to know your feelings. When you disagree with some opinion, say so. Share your concerns, worries or whatever stands in the way of your commitment. Do not say you agree with a plan or action if you really do not support it. Tell it like it is, but in a caring way. Explain what you understand and indicate things which you do not understand. Share in the search for additional information, rather than pretending that you have the answer to everything.

Summary

It may be important to distinguish between trust and trustworthiness. Trust is a broader concept, usually pertaining to feelings or attitudes. It is what we give to someone. Trustworthiness, on the other hand, stems from behavior. It is what we perceive in someone. Trustworthiness includes honesty, integrity and courage, promise-keeping, loyalty and fidelity.

An interesting feature of trust is that to be trustworthy, you must trust others in return. This is demonstrated by an individual's ability to delegate responsibility, share power, and allow freedom of choice.

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A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT II: Interpersonal Leadership Skills

Module 2: Communications Basics

The ability to effectively communicate with other people is an important life skill. Through communication, people reach some understanding of each other, learn to like each other, influence one another, build trust, and learn more about themselves and how people perceive them. People who communicate effectively know how to interact with others flexibly, skillfully, and responsibly, but without sacrificing their own needs and integrity.

What is Communication?

Communication = The exchange of ideas or feelings from one person to another.

Talking does NOT = communication!

*We hear only half of what is said to us,
understand only half of that,
believe only half of that,
and remember only half of that.*

The communication process is complex. We send from 100 to 300 messages a day. These include:

- The message we intend to send.
- The message we actually send.
- The message as the hearer interprets it.
- The response of the hearer based on what he or she heard.
- Our reaction to the exchange of words, meaning and interpretation.

Why do people talk to each other? When we talk, it is because we have an idea or feeling that we want to share with someone. We talk in order to:

- Get acquainted.
- Build relationships.
- Express emotions to others.
- Share information.
- Persuade others to understand our personal views.

In order to have communication, both speaking and listening are required.¹

Types of Communication

Communication can be classified in many different ways. People in leadership roles have many opportunities to communicate with others.

Intrapersonal Communication

When individuals talk to themselves, communication takes place within the brain. It includes their thoughts, experiences and perceptions during a communication event. Behavior that we see on all other levels of communication begins on an

intrapersonal level. On this level, the individual forms personal rules and patterns of communication.

Interpersonal Communication

Communication between individuals is the pattern for all succeeding levels of verbal communication. At this level, each person is aware of sending messages to other persons. Interpersonal communication is sometimes referred to as *dyadic communication*, or communication between two individuals.

Small Group Communication

This is sometimes included in the interpersonal level — the most obvious difference is the number of persons involved in the process. The small group may be a family of three talking at supper, five students working on a class project, or a meeting of an organization with just a few members.

Intercultural Communication

This occurs when the source of the message is from one culture and the receiver is from another — such as when a Frenchman asks directions from an American in New York. The major difference between intercultural and the previous levels is that the communication process is affected by differing, and sometimes, conflicting rules which define acceptable communication between individuals and between groups.

Public Communication or Public Speaking

The speaker sends messages to an audience, which is not identified as individuals. Unlike the previous levels, the speaker is doing most, if not all, of the talking.

Mass Media Communication

Although mass media communication is public communication, not all public communication is mass media. At this level, there is “mass” distribution of a message to a large group of receivers. It is delivered through an impersonal means rather than directly from speaker to audience. These impersonal pathways include television, radio, motion pictures, newspapers, magazines, books, billboards, etc.

Nonverbal Communication (Body Language)

Nonverbal communication is integral to all of the preceding levels — communication is a combination of verbal and nonverbal components.

In nonverbal communication, people send messages to each other without talking. They communicate through facial expressions, head positions, arm and hand movements, body posture, and positioning of legs and feet. How people use “space” also transmits a message. Another example would be carrying or displaying objects that “say” something about themselves.

By being aware of nonverbal communication, one can interpret the signals of others, or send signals that will promote the productive resolution of a dispute.

Awareness of nonverbal communication helps people:

- Project an image of confidence and knowledge.
- Demonstrate power or influence.
- Express sincerity, interest and cooperativeness.
- Create trust.
- Recognize personal tension in self and others.

- Identify discrepancies between what people are saying and what they are actually thinking.
- Change behavior and environment to encourage productive discussion.

Three cautions should be mentioned about nonverbal communication. *First*, an awareness of nonverbal communication is not a panacea for conflict resolution. Recognition and use of nonverbal skills is only one more tool to aid conflict managers or disputants in understanding conflicts. *Second*, awareness does not necessarily mean that something can be done about unwanted nonverbal communication. A lot of nonverbal communication is unconscious. And *third*, the meaning of nonverbal communication depends on both the sender's and the receiver's culture — their race, ethnicity, class, status, sex and individual differences. Some common interpretations of nonverbal behavior cross cultural boundaries, but others do not.^{1,2}

Visual vs. Verbal Activities

Information is shared in two ways — visually and verbally — and it appears that a combination of the two forms is generally most effective.

The use of graphics, or concrete examples, has a number of additional advantages. Concrete examples (graphics) provide a focus of attention for an audience. When people focus on a visual presentation, they share a definite point of reference. Too often, work groups get caught up in abstract word play, losing sight of the real issue. Charts, maps, even simple lists of information can help keep discussion focused.

Visuals also help the facilitator or discussion leader prepare for a meeting. The simple exercise of preparing a series of charts, diagrams, or maps forces you to organize information and anticipate the course of the group's deliberation. When the meeting planner shows up prepared and ready to begin, group members will know what to expect.

Active Listening and Feedback

Good communication requires more than acceptance of feeling or empathy for another person. A listener must also have an accurate understanding of the content or substantive message of a speaker. Accurate feedback of the content may eliminate unnecessary communication conflicts caused by misinformation or misperception. The process of rephrasing a statement can make an item more manageable in size or scope or acceptable in terms of its tone or value.

I-Messages: Most of the messages we send to people about their behavior are “you” messages — messages that are directed at the person. These have a high probability of putting people down, making them feel guilty, and making them resistant to change. An “I-Message” allows a person who is affected by another's behavior to express the impact it is having on him or her. This leaves the responsibility for modifying the behavior with the person who demonstrated the behavior.

“I-Messages” build relationships and do not place the sender in the position of enforcing a new behavior. Many people have been taught to avoid “I” (as in I want or I would like), so it is often difficult to use this method.

Four Parts of an “I-Message”

1. Specific behavior (“When you . . .”)
2. Resulting feeling (“It . . .”)
3. Effect (“I feel . . .”)
4. Resolution (“So, would you . . .”)

Example:

Part 1: “When you cut me off . . .”

Part 2: “It hurts my feelings . . .”

Part 3: “I feel as though you don’t value my opinion,”

Part 4: “So, would you please hear me out.”
Since communication is the exchange of ideas or feelings from one person to another, it implies that the message has been heard.

Effective Listening

People do more listening than any other form of communication. But most listen at an efficiency level of less than about 25 percent. Tests show that, immediately after listening to a 10-minute oral presentation, the average listener has heard, understood, properly evaluated, and retained only half of what was said. Within 48 hours, that comprehension rate dropped to one-quarter.

People generally remember:

10 % of what they read

20 % of what they hear

30 % of what they see

50 % of what they hear and see

70 % of what they say and write

90 % of what they say as they do something

Whose Responsibility: The Speaker or Listener?

Who has the primary responsibility for effective verbal communications, the speaker or the listener? This question has been asked of thousands of people. Seventy-five percent of those who answer say the speaker; 25 percent say the listener.²

This attitude is mirrored in people’s behavior as listeners. Because they assume the speaker has the main responsibility, they listen passively instead of taking an active, responsible role.

Just think how much better we could communicate if the speaker and the listener each would take 51 percent of the responsibility. Although this adds up to 102 percent, which may not be good mathematics, it represents highly effective communications.

A Good Listener:

- Works at listening.
- Helps speaker transmit thoughts.
- Listens to understand, not to refute.

Listening

First, what do we mean by “listening”? It is more than just hearing — that is only the first part of listening. Three other parts are equally important:

1. *Interpretation* — Interpreting what was heard leads to understanding or misunderstanding. Your brain absorbs and comprehends what you hear.
2. *Evaluation* — Weigh the information and decide how you will use it.
3. *Reaction* — Based on what you heard and how you evaluated, you act on it.

Listening is our primary communication activity. Studies show that we spend 80 percent of our waking hours communicating. About 45 percent of that time is spent listening. Our listening habits are not the result of training, but rather the result of the lack of it.

Listening is our number one communications activity:

- Through open ears, the mind can absorb an endless amount of new information and ideas.
- It has been said that there’s at least one thing learned from everyone we meet, provided one bothers to listen.
- A listener loose in a world of talkers has one unbeatable edge: the flow of new ideas through the ears to the mind never stops.
- Listening is not a 9 to 5 job.
- The brain works four times faster than most people speak. We often wander into distraction.^{1,3}

Listening Principles to Remember

People tend to agree with other people they like, not so much because of their ideas but because of the fact that they like them. People also tend to like other people who listen to them. A key factor in listening is the ability to deliberately over-estimate the value and importance of the other person’s point of view.

Points for Good Listening

Is it any wonder things get garbled along the way? Communication at best is a messy process. Good communication requires at least two basic skills: listening and giving feedback.

Good listening takes a lot of serious practice. One way to practice is to try to concentrate for one minute out of every hour on one specific sound or on what any one person is saying. Many of us at the start will only be able to concentrate for a few seconds. Keep practicing until you can hold complete concentration for at least one minute. This will be harder than you think, but it can improve your listening proficiency.

Practicing improved concentration methods may not make you a perfect listener, but it can make you a good listener. The pay-off is in better understanding, increased efficiency and closer friendships.

Good listening requires that you concentrate on the speaker.

- What is the speaker trying to say?
- What point is the person trying to make?
- Are the facts accurate, unbiased and complete?
- Is the source reliable?
- Listen for ideas.
- Think while you listen. Learn to eliminate distractions by concentrating on the ideas the speaker is presenting rather than pretending to listen.

As a person is speaking, think about relationships between facts and you will find that the person may be using several facts to develop one or two main ideas.

If you take notes, write down just enough to let you recall the ideas. Avoid taking everything down word for word, or you may miss the ideas that are presented.

Control your responses. Listen without judging. Try not to argue with the speaker's words in your mind. Avoid dismissing the speakers' ideas in advance, or judging the speaker's appearance. You can judge later after you have heard the information the speaker is giving.

Listen carefully to topics that are hard for you to follow.

Ask questions. If you can't interrupt, make a note to ask when the speaker is finished.

List things that get in the way when you listen to someone else:

- Words or phrases that prejudice you against the speaker
- Factors in the other person's appearance that may bias you
- Emotions (fear of asking silly questions, feeling guilty because you think you should already know something, etc.) that prevent you from learning.

Active Listening

The purposes of active listening are to:

1. Help you check your understanding of what the person says and feels.
2. Generate further dialogue.
3. Help you improve your empathetic listening.
4. Build rapport.
5. Show that you understand and care.

Active listening is not just refraining from talking, but actively trying to understand the other person's total communication.

- Listen for both content and feelings.
- Respond to the feelings expressed.
- Accept both positive and negative expressions and feelings.
- Listen between the lines (for the nonverbal communication).
- Use the reflection technique.
- Use the pauses effectively.
- Summarize from time-to-time to indicate progress, to highlight major points, and to wrap up important sections of the interview.

Maintain careful attention to both content and feeling. Content refers to the meaning of a word. Feeling refers to the emotional state of the person. Feelings may include anger, frustration, fear, joy, sadness, domination and affection.

- Try to anticipate what the speaker is getting at.
- Do not form conclusions or begin to construct your reply until you first understand the speaker's position.
- Listen between the lines, try to pick up both the content and how the speaker feels about his or her position.
- Pause and consider what you heard before replying.
- Assume you probably don't understand completely and ask for feedback on what you think you heard.

Reflect. Re-state in your own words what you understand the other person to have just said. Include both content and feeling.

Repeat. Do not judge, question, argue or evaluate. At this stage, simply repeat your understanding and encourage the other to continue talking.

Behavior and Attitudes of the Good Listener

- Tries to see the world, the situation, the problem as the speaker sees them.
- Places understanding foremost.
- Shows interest in the speaker.
- Accepts the speaker as he or she is.
- Respects the speaker's opinion and attitude.
- Willing to take time to listen, and determined to listen attentively.
- Controls his or her emotions.
- Is open-minded, receptive, but analytical.
- Has a wide range of interests, and is curious about things.
- Is convinced of own responsibilities to the speaker and undertakes this responsibility.
- Stands ready to listen patiently.

Using Feedback

Feedback allows a listener to tell the speaker whether the message was understood. If it is done with care and consideration, it is an important tool for good communication. Feedback lets you describe your reaction instead of evaluating the other person's performance. It is very helpful to be specific and address a behavior the listener can change.

Listening Undergoes Distortion

In listening, when you pass a message along through two or more persons, it often undergoes distortion each time it is repeated. Three different tendencies occur when the message is heard:

- Leveling: Tendency to drop some details out of information you hear.
- Sharpening: Tendency to make some details sound more important, and give them more emphasis than they had as you heard them.
- Projection: Tendency to add data out of your own viewpoint or mental outlook to what you have heard from someone else. How can you, as a listener, avoid such distortion?

Suggestions for Limiting Distortions

- Repeat what you hear to the satisfaction of the person who just told it to you. You might say, “Let’s see if I’ve got this right.”
- Put the key elements of an important message in writing.
- Don’t assume that somebody is giving you a message exactly the way he or she heard it from someone else.
- If it’s important, verify it with the speaker’s source or the original source.
- Have your organization routinely check important information at each step as it is passed along through the chain of people.

Feedback allows the listener to relate information back to the speaker about the content or feelings conveyed. The person receiving the feedback is made aware of how his or her behavior affects himself or herself and others in the group.¹ This also serves as a check for understanding. Some examples of this are:

- The way I understand you is . . .
- Is this how you feel . . .?
- You sound as though . . .
- I get the feeling that . . .
- It sounds as if . . .

Ways to Give Feedback

Descriptive: Descriptive rather than evaluative. Describing one’s own reaction leaves the individual free to use it or not use it as he or she sees fit. Avoiding evaluative language reduces the need for the individual to react defensively. The main purpose is to understand the speaker, not to belittle, mimic, or antagonize.

Specific: Be specific rather than general. To be told that one is “dominating,” will probably not be as effective as saying, “Just now when we were deciding the issue, you did not listen to what others said, and I felt forced to accept your arguments or face attack from you.”

Consider Needs: Take into account the needs of both the receiver and the giver of feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.

Realistic Request: Direct feedback toward behavior which the receiver can do something about. Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of some shortcoming over which those observing him or her can answer.

Solicited: Feedback should be solicited, rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver has somehow formulated the kind of questions which those observing him or her can answer.

Well-Timed: Consider timing. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior (depending on the person’s readiness to hear it, support available from others, etc.).

Clear: Check to insure clear communication. One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback he or she has received to see if it corresponds to what the sender had in mind.

Check for: When feedback is given in a training group, both the giver and receiver have the opportunity to check with others in the group on the accuracy of the feedback. Is this one person's impression or an impression shared by others?

Feedback is a way of giving help; it is a corrective mechanism for individuals who want to learn how well their behavior matches their intentions.^{1,4}

Influencing Others

Persuasion is simply the means of getting others to think and act the way you want them to. You persuade people by convincing them that your ideas, beliefs, opinions and feelings should be accepted. Persuasion often involves appealing to listeners' feelings and/or interests and ideas. Persuasion begins from an information base. Your most important boundary is your ethical responsibility. Effective persuasive communication is ethical communication. Persuasion is likely to succeed when the following conditions are met:

S-M-C-R MODEL

- The Source:** The source of the persuasion shows conviction about her or his subject, is trustworthy, credible, and competent — an expert or authority in the area of concern.
- The Message:** The message is believable, reasonable, practical, probable, and supported by evidence and facts, as well as opinion.
- The Channel:** The way the message is delivered — by one-on-one conversation by the speaker, to a group or through mass media or written methods, affects the way it is received and understood.
- The Receiver:** The receivers (audience) are not presently ego-involved with the issue and have a personal stake in the outcome. The goal should not be too far from the focus of the receivers' beliefs. The period of time must be sufficient for a carefully considered program or "campaign" to bring about later effects.³

If you want to change a person's attitude, you must first change her or his behavior to parallel the desired attitude. Working for changes in attitude, in hope of getting the desired behavior, is more often than not met with frustration and failure. More information on persuasive strategies is provided in the module *Influencing Policy Decisions*.

Communication Difficulties

Individual differences are a major cause of misunderstandings in communication. People want different things to satisfy their needs because of the interests (things wanted or enjoyed), values (things important or believed in), and attitudes (thoughts or feelings about ideas, people, things) they have acquired.

To avoid communication misunderstandings, try to accept and understand individual differences. Examine your own reactions to people and situations so you can imagine how it would be to be someone else. Practice empathy.

There are many ways individuals can misunderstand each other. For example, a person may be preoccupied and not able to listen to what others have to say. Or, a person can be so interested in communicating his/her own message and formulating a response that he/she listens to others only to find an opening to communicate his/her own message. Sometimes individuals listen in order to evaluate and make judgements about the speaker. The speaker may then become defensive and end the interaction. A lack of trust may also be a cause of communication distortion. In a group or between two people, misunderstandings can cause a reduction in the information that is shared and an uncertainty concerning the information being communicated. It takes continued effort and attention to maintain effective communication.⁴

There may be cultural, language or semantic differences. Sometimes we are blocked by our failure to understand clearly the words or terms used. There are the different connotations and meanings accorded words in various sections of the country, and by different racial, occupational and other groups. Even within a single organization, these factors often blur understanding between occupational and professional groups.

Four responses or roles that often cause difficulty in communications, as well as in relationships and task activities, are the:

Placater

The Placater always talks in an ingratiating way, trying to please, apologizing, never disagreeing, no matter what.

- WITH WORDS the placater always agrees. For example: “Whatever you want is okay. I am just here to make you happy.”
- WITH BODY the placater indicates a sense of helplessness.
- WHILE ON THE INSIDE the placater feels: “I feel like nothing: without him or her, I am dead. I am worthless.”

Blamer

The Blamer is a fault-finder, a dictator, a boss and always acts superior.

- WITH WORDS the blamer always disagrees, and says (or seems to say): “You never do anything right. What is the matter with you?” Or, “If it weren’t for you, everything would be all right.”
- WITH BODY the blamer indicates: “I am the boss around here.”
- WHILE INSIDE the feeling is: “I am lonely and unsuccessful.”

Computer

The Computer is very correct, very reasonable with no semblance of any feeling showing. He or she is calm, cool and collected, and is almost totally disinterested and tries to sound intellectual. The computer uses big words.

- WITH WORDS the computer is ultra-reasonable. For example: “If one were to observe carefully, one might notice the workworn hands of someone present here.”

- WITH BODY the computer is stoic like a machine and seems to be saying: “I’m calm, cool and collected.”
- WHILE ON THE INSIDE the computer may really be saying: “I feel vulnerable.”

Distracter

The Distracter never makes a direct response to anything. Anything he or she says is totally irrelevant to what anyone else is saying or doing.

- WITH WORDS the distracter makes no sense and is totally irrelevant.
- WITH BODY the distracter is angular and off somewhere else.
- WHILE ON THE INSIDE the distracter may be saying: “Nobody cares. There is no place for me.”

Mutual trust and respect are the foundation for effective communications. When both of these exist, goals can be developed to which all individuals and groups are committed. Communication systems and procedures based on shared goals and developed cooperatively are those most supported, most adhered to, and consequently most efficient.

Write Like a Pro (Written Communications)

Crisp correct writing is essential to successful leadership communication. When a letter, report, or program flyer includes an error, readers are likely to remember the error rather than the message.

Better Letters

When you can’t be present in person, make sure the letter that represents you will make the best impression possible:

- Date your letter correctly.
- Use the correct address with zip+four. Mailing lists should be updated on a regular basis, at least once a year. (Zip+four information is available at http://www.usps.gov/ncsc/lookups/lookup_zip+4.html.)
- If you don’t know the person to whom the letter is addressed, don’t guess. A phone call may be all you need to obtain the correct information. If you can’t determine to whom a letter should be addressed, use a job title rather than a generic Dear Sir.

Example:

Dear Project Director:

- Formal salutations require care: Pat Jones could be a man or a woman. To be safe, use Dear Pat Jones, rather than Mr. or Ms.
- Use block style (not indented); separate paragraphs by one line.
- Group thoughts or topics in paragraphs, but consider limiting paragraphs to no more than 11 lines. Longer paragraphs lose the reader.
- Get a letter off to a good start: Start with a positive.

Example:

Thank you for agreeing to chair the county committee to evaluate services for the developmentally disabled.

- Close a letter with a specific request for action, a summary of ideas within the letter, or a statement of satisfaction or appreciation.
- When action is needed, be specific about deadlines.
- Close the letter in a professional manner.

Examples:

Sincerely or Cordially.

- Sign your name legibly over your title. The title may not be important to you, but is important to the recipient, he or she will know how to respond.
- Proofread your letter, and proofread it again. Professional writers read from the bottom up; if not anticipating the end of the sentence, they are more likely to catch errors.⁵

Tips From the Professional

Although there are occasions when, no matter how hard we try, we miss a mistake or wish that we had chosen another phrase or expression, these tips from professional writers can help you sharpen your communications skills:⁵

- Never overlook the importance of proofreading. Remember that the person who typed the document is least likely to find errors.
- Spell checks are not perfect; remain alert, with special attention to names and words that sound alike but do not have the same meaning: stationary (one place); stationery (as in envelope).
- Try never to say “never.”
- Avoid beginning a letter or program announcement with a question. The reader can answer the question with a “No” and stop reading the message.
- **Choose your words carefully:**
 - a. *Should* implies that someone ought to. *Will* says you are going to do it.
 - b. *Can* implies ability; *may* gives permission.
 - c. *Accept* means to agree with; *except* means to exclude.
 - d. A *capital* is a letter or a city in which government offices are grouped; a *capitol* is the building in which governing occurs.
 - e. That or which? That introduces a clause that is necessary to the meaning of the sentence. Example: The rain that caused the flooding has stopped.
 - f. Which introduces a clause that is not necessary to the meaning of the sentence. Example: The new car, which is red, is ready for the fast lane.
 - g. *Affect* is a verb that means to change or influence; *effect* is a verb that makes it happen.
 - h. Effect also can be used as a noun that describes the result
- Do not begin a sentence with “However” or “Nevertheless.”
- When a number is the first word in a sentence, spell it out. Ten members attended.

- Use numerals in tables and when referring to 10 or more of anything. When referring to the numbers 1 to 9, spell them out.
- Use a comma to define quantities: 1,000 not 1000.
- Use *more than* 1,000 entries rather than *over* 1,000 entries. “Over” describes position, not a quantity. The handouts are on the table over by the window.
- Percent means per hundred. A percentage describes a portion relative to the whole.
- When a sentence ends with an abbreviation, two periods are not necessary: The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m.
- Skip slang and local expressions.
- Be specific to get the job done. Instead of: Please return the permission slip ASAP, try: Please return the permission slip by Friday, November 15, at 4 p.m.
- Be kind. If you have a complaint, try phrasing it as a concern stated as an “I” message.

Summary

Communication is simply an exchange of information—both giving and receiving. Talking, listening, reading, and understanding face and body movement are communication skills you use every day. But, communication also includes what you do and how you do it. Are you aware of the many ways you communicate each day?

Most people think of speaking before groups as an important leadership activity. There are many other communication skills that are just as important in your leadership roles.

Capable facilitators are excellent listeners, careful observers of nonverbal communication, skilled at conversing informally in small groups and on the telephone, able to obtain feedback from others, and skilled at writing. Learning activities in communicating will help you further expand these skills.

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Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
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Margaret Phillips,
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FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
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Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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Module 3: **Discussions and Presentations**

UNIT II: Interpersonal Leadership Skills

Facilitating a discussion meeting is different from leading an organization's monthly meeting using parliamentary procedure. The facilitator is a neutral person who gets the participants to talk about pieces of a problem and potential parts of a solution through a planned process. The neutral person is usually someone outside the group who has no vested interest in the outcome. If a group member serves as the facilitator, it's important that the role of the facilitator be distinguished from that of a member.

Effective Discussions

Discussion in its context of leadership is not just talking. There is a purpose, usually related to solving a problem or initiating some action. Think about the group members and the topic as you plan your work as a facilitator or discussion leader. For example:

1. Present the problem in a positive way, without offering any suggestions for the solution to the problem. "We have been having a small attendance lately. What can we do about it?"
2. Choose discussion topics that are familiar. If a topic that needs to be discussed is unfamiliar, provide background when you present the problem.
3. If the group is often negative, use methods of discussion that have rules which avoid making judgments on suggestions until later in the decision-making process.
4. If the group is large, use methods of discussion which break the group into small groups or have people work individually. Allow time for people to respond. Sometimes you need to even postpone the discussion to a later meeting.
5. Arrange the group so that eye contact is possible. If the group is small, a circle that includes the leader is best. If the group is large, make some decisions in small circles and then share together with the whole group.
6. If the group tends to go along with decisions, but not want to work, set up the work plan in the same meeting. Decide who will do what and when. Then if no one wants to do it, it will be apparent right away that it was a poor group decision.

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What Causes "Lead Balloons"?

The term "lead balloons" refers to statements and actions that cause discussions to go off track or even stop completely.¹ Examples include:

1. **Poor Presentation of the Topic**

If the topic sounds boring, negative, or favors only one solution to a problem, people respond negatively. “We’ve been having such poor attendance, maybe we should not meet for a couple months.”

2. **Lack of Knowledge**

If no one knows enough about the subject, or there is little interest, it is hard to have a good discussion.

3. **Rejected Ideas**

Some groups habitually reject ideas, which often causes members to fear criticism. If you brainstorm a lot of ideas before beginning to judge them, group members feel more free to participate.

4. **Group Size**

If the group is large, some members won’t speak up. They may feel that their ideas are silly, won’t be welcome, or are shy about talking in front of people. Some people need time to think about how they feel and can’t decide things immediately. This may mean that just a few people will dominate the discussion.

5. **Group Arrangement**

How a group is arranged can make a difference. It is usually easier to discuss things if you can see the other members of the group. If the leader is standing behind a table and the group is seated in rows, it is more difficult for the group to freely discuss issues.

6. **Apathy**

Sometimes people “go along” with what the group is discussing just to avoid problems. They don’t like to see people upset, so they choose what they think they should favor. This can lead to the whole group continuing an unwanted project.

Active Discussion Techniques

Everyone will enjoy the group more if they take part. Active participation is essential for maximum productivity, and good group discussion can ensure this. There are many methods to help all members participate in the discussion and add to the alternatives the group can consider.^{1,2} Some examples are:

BRAINSTORMING is a method for producing a lot of ideas without judging them.

BRAIN DRAIN is similar to brainstorming, but a competition between two smaller groups to produce a lot more ideas.

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE involves individuals giving ideas which are compiled and then rated by each person in the group, using a point system.

QUICK DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES allow for several discussions in a short time period. These are often called buzz sessions.

THE FUTURES WHEEL helps group members think systematically about the consequences of a future situation.

OPEN-ENDED STATEMENTS are unfinished sentences that group members complete and then share in a discussion.

IDEA SEARCH is a way for individuals to look over an idea carefully, trying to discover many different angles or ways to see it.

Ground Rules for the Facilitator

Facilitation is based on trust, caring and communication skills. By providing non-directive guidance, the facilitator helps the group arrive at the understandings and decisions related to its task. The group works on consensus, using the nominal group process, with no formal votes taken. The facilitator focuses on the group and its work. The role is one of guidance and assistance, never control.³

A facilitator's work deals with the content and the process of the meeting. Content facilitation includes clarifying confusing statements, identifying common threads or themes in a discussion, summarizing and organizing the ideas given, and testing for consensus by expressing the decisions that emerge from the group process. In brief, it focuses on what the individuals are talking about and what they are deciding as a group.

The process function refers to how the group is working. This includes making sure everyone gets a chance to participate, pointing out feelings that are interfering with the group's work, and helping members express and deal with their conflicts. Content and process are both basic, vital elements for achieving the group's purpose. No attempt is made to separate these two functions since, in reality, they often overlap.

Guiding a group effectively calls for careful observation and attention. The facilitator should not only listen closely to what people are saying, but notice participants' faces and posture for non-verbal cues on how the process is working. Eye contact can be used to acknowledge people's desire to speak and to let them know their ideas are being heard. It is critical to pay full attention throughout the meeting in an attempt to understand what is going on.

The facilitator should abstain from participation in partisan discussions. Good facilitation is hard work but it is critical to the shared leadership process. It is difficult to attend to the group's dynamics and needs as well as to your personal desire to express a particular idea. Keeping your distance is important for having the whole picture in view and for guiding the group towards its goals.

A safe, friendly meeting environment can help leaders achieve the planned meeting goals and objectives. Establishing ground rules that respect individual rights and responsibilities can lead to a successful meeting experience. This builds trust among participants. It is frustrating and unproductive to the participants and facilitator when opinions are not respected, individuals are criticized on a personal basis, and many views are not expressed.^{3,4}

Here are some basic ground rules for leading a meeting addressing controversial issues. Other guidelines may be added by the group.

For the Group Member:

- One person speaks at a time.
- All will share ideas in order.
- Questions may be asked to clarify ideas.
- Persons do not criticize other persons.
- Ideas may be reviewed to look for themes.
- Feelings may be expressed. They are not to be sloughed off or denied but should not dominate the discussions.
- During discussions, people should talk about positions not personalities.

For the Facilitator:

- Make sure participants are physically comfortable.
- Share meeting ground rules with participants.
- Communicate with everyone at his/her level.
- Act as the neutral person — refrain from giving personal opinion.
- Maintain a positive group atmosphere.
- Allow think time.
- AVOID: Lengthy comments.
 - Giving verbal rewards for good answers.
 - Asking questions, i.e. Who should be in charge?
 - How do you get the government to do it?
 - Asking loaded questions using value words like good, pretty, evident, population group (senior citizen, children, etc.).
 - Using a “know it all” tone of voice.

Productive Presentations

When you have something important to say, you can use several methods to make your voice count. Clarity and sincerity are more important than high sounding words. First of all, identify the problem and issues which concern you — do your homework on the facts.

Every presentation needs a purpose and a clear structure. Listeners like speeches that have a clear purpose. They prefer speeches that are organized and easy to follow, rather than ones which begin nowhere, ramble on, and end in a confused manner. Think through the information you wish to share with your audience.

Be direct and cover as much information as you can without being frantic and rushed. Talk in simple terms, use short sentences, and avoid extraneous information and digressions.

The basic organization is simple: An opening or introduction, the main body and the summary or conclusion.

Introduction

The introduction needs to accomplish two things:

1. Grab the audience’s attention.
2. Briefly set the stage for your presentation by telling the audience what your purpose is and what you are going to tell them.

A good opening technique will motivate your audience enough to listen. Challenging questions, quotations or illustrations are often effective. Let your enthusiasm show.

The Main Body

- State the facts, and be as objective as possible.
- Support your information, and be specific in your explanations. Use examples which are concise and relate to the needs and interests of your audience.
- Acknowledge and refute any contrary views if appropriate.
- Keep your speech moving. Do not spend too much time on one topic.
- Use repetition to emphasize a point.

Conclusion

- End your presentation on a positive note.
- Restate your main ideas.
- Your goal is to motivate your audience to understand, to agree with, and to act on your proposal. Make it easy to respond — state what you want done.

Almost everyone feels some stress when speaking before a group — whether you're a first timer or a veteran with lots of experience. It often helps to prepare a written text, but don't read it word-for-word. Large index cards typed in capital letters work well for many people.

Many presentations end with question-answer sessions. If you are confronted with questions you can't answer, don't try to “wing it.” Say you don't know and offer to find out. If you are confronted with hostile questioning, stay calm. Don't try to answer point-for-point. Try to answer briefly and move on to another question. After the last questions, try to emphasize your most important points very quickly.

Practice in front of a mirror, smile at the audience and speak clearly.

Developing the Content

Content is the “what” of the presentation, and answers and supports the “why” of your objectives. The following process is designed to help you develop the content for your presentation.

What to Say

Think of as many key issues or points as possible to support your objectives. This will create the framework for the presentation.

1. Review your presentation objectives and write down as many main ideas as possible on 3 x 5 cards, large sticky notes or notepaper. Write down one idea per card and, at this point, don't try to edit or organize.
2. Narrow the objectives to three to five main points.
3. Build the sub-points on 3 x 5 cards.
 - List supporting ideas or statements.
 - Give explanations, data or evidence.
 - Use enough sub-points to verify your main ideas.
 - Arrange cards to best suit your needs. Keep in mind your audience and objectives.

How to Say It

The next step is to plan “how” you are going to say it — not only the style and approach you want to use, but also what visuals, handouts and aides you will use.

Remember, “It's not what you say, but how you say it.” The best content can be destroyed by poor delivery.

Tools to Use in an Introduction

ANECDOTE: A short story to illustrate a point.

HUMOR: A great ice breaker, but use with caution.

RHETORICAL QUESTION: A question with an obvious answer. For example, “Would you like to make a lot of money with no risk?”

SHOCKING STATEMENT: It captures audience attention, but use with caution.

10 DEADLY SINS FOR PRESENTATIONS

1. **Appear unprepared.** Be prepared, but fumble enough times so that it seems you are not.
2. **Be late.** Arrive about two minutes before your meeting. Take no time to assess your audience and develop rapport. Send the message that audience members aren't important - only the content is.
3. **Improperly handle questions.** Put them off until later. Look exasperated when the same person asks many questions. Do not clarify to be sure you answer the right question.
4. **Go overtime.** Pretend you are playing the Super Bowl or seventh game of the World Series and take the game into overtime. Running past the scheduled time limit makes audiences crazy!
5. **Be unfamiliar with available information.** Do not know the names of key people, or upcoming events. Show no genuine interest and concern in the subject material and participants by ignoring fundamental information.
6. **Botch the use of audio-visuals, or don't use them at all.** Block the flipchart as you write on it, use colors that cannot be seen, stand in front of the overhead, and do not ever turn it off while changing transparencies.
7. **Seem to be off-schedule.** Keep people guessing about how you can cover only two out of 10 items on your agenda by lunch, and still finish on time. Do not tell them that is the plan.
8. **Start late.** Start late and you subliminally train your audiences to show up late, and for a bonus, you also penalize people who are on time.
9. **Appear disorganized.** Fumble everything you handle and always put the most important things in the wrong place.
10. **Avoid looking at the audience.** People want to feel connected. To prevent that from happening, look only at the walls, windows, ceiling or equipment (nothing that has eyes or feelings).

Developing Audience Enthusiasm

In any talk, discussion, or workshop, enthusiasm is the magic ingredient. Enthusiasm is what convinces your audience to see the value of the information you are sharing. Enthusiasm helps overcome inertia; helps build audience acceptance and create a feeling of enjoyment and togetherness between the listener and the speaker. Every talk, presentation or report should abound with enthusiasm. Remember, enthusiasm is contagious. Once you have it, it is not difficult to infect the audience with it.⁵

Speak from the heart! Let everyone know how you really FEEL about your material and your group members or audience.

Speaking Up — Your words are not being spoken for your benefit, but for benefit of all your listeners. Make sure everyone in the audience can hear you! Remember, they are there to listen to you — let them hear what you have to say!

Smiling — A smile is contagious. It lets everyone know you are a real person. A smile is the very essence of enthusiasm. It lets everyone know how you really feel deep inside. (Don't fake it — be SINCERE!)

Varying Your Volume — There must be a continuous variance in volume in order for your audience to recognize important points when you come to them. Voice modulation is one of the most important parts of creating enthusiasm within your listener.

Pausing — Every listener must be given an occasional rest from the bombardment of your remarks. No matter how interesting your material and delivery might be, your audience requires an occasional rest. Give it to them in the form of a pause. While you are collecting thoughts, searching for the next point, etc., let your audience rest; don't fill up such time with “and uh,” “er” or “ah.”

Speed — Make sure your words flow in the 125 to 160 words per minute time frame. However, don't speak the same speed throughout your presentation. Vary your speed as you vary the strength of your voice. Try to stay within the appropriate time frame, but vary your speed by occasionally speaking a dozen words or so more slowly than others, etc.

Change of Pace — During your presentation, try to change your pace by injecting an amusing idea, story or experience. Total abstract ideas leave an audience bored. Stories or experiences help to build interest in, and an enthusiasm for, your material! Sprinkle your talk, presentation or report with pertinent examples.

Gestures — Like a smile and voice modulation, gestures play an important part in creating enthusiasm within your listener. Avoid the “holding-onto-the-lectern-for-dear-life” position. Don't pay attention to your hands, let them react to your words naturally. If you really want to make a point, do it with gestures as well as voice modulation.

Summary

Whenever two or more people get together, discussion usually follows. In some groups, the discussions are lively and interesting, with everyone sharing ideas and having fun as well as accomplishing the task they are discussing. Other groups have discussions that are tedious and burdensome. These may be discussions to set and achieve goals or more formal presentations. Basic communication skills are combined with special techniques to fit the occasion.

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A project of the
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Katey Walker, Co-chair
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Family Resource & Public Policy

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4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

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Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
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FACS, Riley County

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County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT III: Group/ Organizational Leadership Skills

Module 1: Productive Groups

Many different types of groups are involved with community activities. Some are loose and unstructured; others are formal organizations or associations. Some are temporary committees or task forces; others are ongoing parts of a structured organization or coalition. A productive group accepts and supports differences, communicates openly with respect, and works together for mutual goals. A newly formed group does not have clear rules on what is appropriate behavior. Fear of not being accepted or respected can create problems. It is important that all group members get to know one another and feel comfortable with one another. A variety of activities and approaches can help meet the needs of group members and encourage effective decision making and action.

When a new group is being formed, or when an individual joins an existing group for the first time, similar problems are encountered by most people. The usual way of interacting with others does not work because the situation is not familiar. Often people hold back, waiting to see what others are going to do. Not only is the situation strange, but it is unclear what others think is proper behavior. In a sense, group members have an identity problem. They know who they are as individuals, but not who they are in relation to others in the group.

What is a Group?

A group is a collection of individuals where:

- Interaction among members occurs. Members work together and relate to each other in an interdependent manner.
- Individuals see themselves and one other as members of the group and find their membership rewarding. Greater benefits are provided to a group than to separate individuals.
- Members share a common purpose or goal that they understand and accept.
- Members have an established, mutually acceptable structure for accomplishing tasks and interacting with each other.
- Members successfully complete different tasks in order to accomplish a shared purpose.

A collection of individuals is not a “group” at its first organizational meeting. The cohesiveness and team spirit that characterize a group come with time, while people gather to share ideas and skills to achieve a common goal.^{1,2}

Types of Groups

Groups may be very loosely structured or be formal organizations with by-laws and specific operational procedures. Committees, task forces, teams, clubs, and other organizations are examples of groups with various structures:

1. Collections of individuals with loose ties.

Example: An informal network of persons who know one another and who exchange ideas and sources of information.

2. Informal group.
Example: Volunteers for different organizations who get together occasionally to discuss their activities.
3. Loosely organized groups.
Example: A self-selected volunteer task force which meets a few times to carry out a community service project.
4. Formal groups.
Example: Organizations such as a civic club or hospital auxiliary.

Networks, Teams and Coalitions

There are many specialized types of groups associated with organizational and community activities. Some are loose and unstructured, such as informal networks — some are temporary, such as task forces designed to address a specific project or issue. Teams, while generally associated with sports, have become a more common method of organizing work groups and project groups. When goals require more resources than any one organization or agency can provide, coalitions or formal alliances or collaborations often develop. A wide variety of committees, study groups, political action groups, and other special groups, go through similar stages of development and action.

Basic Needs of People in Groups

If you want loyalty, interest and the best effort from each person in a group, you must take into account that individuals in groups have needs. The situations in which group members are placed should make sense,^{2,4} not only to the leader, but to each individual as well. As individuals, group members look for:

1. A Sense of Belonging.
 - A feeling that no one objects to his or her presence.
 - A feeling that he or she is truly welcome.
 - A feeling of being honestly needed.
2. A Share in Making the Rules of the Group.
 - Ground rules ensure respect and participation.
 - Guidelines describe the way in which the group works together toward common goals.
3. To Have Confidence and Trust in the Leader and Other Group Members.
 - To recognize that everyone has knowledge and skills to contribute to solving problems.
 - To know that everyone is working toward the common goals, rather than on “hidden agendas.”
4. To Know What is Expected.
 - Goals and responsibilities should be spelled out in detail so that work can be done effectively.
 - When addressing new issues and situations, the group members themselves may have to chart their own expectations.
5. A Share in Planning the Group Goals.
 - A feeling that all ideas have had a fair hearing.
 - A feeling that the goals are within reach and make sense.
 - A feeling that the group is doing something worthwhile.

6. To Have Challenging Responsibilities
 - To use their abilities to contribute to reaching the goals.
 - To match interest with activities
7. To See Progression Toward the Common Goal.
 - This can be achieved by keeping everyone informed through updates, consultations and briefings on current accomplishments and future expectations.
 - Allow time for sharing and discussion.

Social Environment

The social environment is defined as the way in which group members relate to one another. It is important to the emotional state of the members. Trust is one of the most basic parts of a satisfactory social environment for a group. Until the individuals learn to trust each other, little progress on the group task is made. Forming a climate of trust is one of the most important stages of group development. In fact, the first crisis most groups face involves the ability of two individuals to trust themselves and each other. A comfortable physical environment also contributes to the productivity of a group.

Forming a Group

Groups, large and small, are drawn together in a variety of situations that lead to some initial anxiety or expectancy, which is common with new experiences. Groups commonly go through these stages: forming, storming, norming and performing. Most organizational groups do not go on forever. They may complete their work and then a new group may form or reform.

As a group forms, it goes through stages of development. The sequence and progression of group development are interrelated, and each stage exhibits a different level of trust and dependence or independence. Each stage builds on the preceding one.

In the beginning stages of group formation, a group facilitator who understands the various developmental phases will guide the group toward the performing phase. If there is no progress, a climate of conflict or disappointment could spread quickly among group members.^{2,3}

Other names may be applied to the stages. Forming may be called Pre-affiliation or Gathering. Storming may be called Chaos or referred to as High Power and Control Struggle, while Norming may be referred to as Unity or Intimacy. Performing is called Differentiation, while Reforming may be termed Separation. The names are less important than recognizing the developmental stages.¹

Facilitating Group Development

Group facilitators can get things started off on the right foot by employing some warm-up activities, often referred to as “icebreakers.” These activities help support the early stages of the group’s development or energize the group for work. Group-building activities are much more than icebreakers at a party.²

A group-building activity is an organized method used to acquaint the group members, to form them into partnerships or teams, or to promote openness and sharing. Before beginning a presentation, discussion or other type of meeting, it is

important to help members get to know one another and build a sense of comfort as well as a sense of belonging.

Elements of a Group Coming Together

As a group forms, it goes through stages of development. To know and recognize these stages is the blueprint of forming a group. The sequence and progression of group development are interrelated. Each stage exhibits a different level of trust and dependence or independence, and each stage builds on the preceding one.

Environment

The environment of a group can help or hinder interaction among group members. There are two ways in which a group can be affected. One is by the physical environment, and the other is by the social environment. A comfortable physical environment includes temperature, furnishings, space, noise level, and other surroundings that are satisfactory for the participants and the purpose of the group meeting. The social environment is defined by the way in which group members relate to one another. It is important to the emotional state of the members. If the social environment keeps the feelings of group members at a good level, they can work together effectively.

In the beginning stages of group formation, it is a must for the group leader to understand the various stages of development in order to bring the group to the problem-solving phase. Anxiety levels are already high within the group, and relationships are still formal and distant. When there is no progress, a climate of disappointment could spread quickly. It might terminate the group before it even gets started.

Trust is absolutely essential for groups to grow and develop. It reduces one's own and the other person's fear of betrayal or rejection. Trust builds the hope of acceptance and support. Creating a climate of trust involves everyone's self-disclosure. A person who dares to entrust himself or herself to others goes far in creating a climate of trust in a group. Forming this trust among group members is called bonding.

Trust is one of the most important ways of creating a good social environment for a group. Until the individuals learn to trust each other, little progress on the group task is made. Because of this, forming a climate of trust is one of the most important tasks. The first crisis most groups face involves the ability of two individuals to trust themselves and each other.^{5,6}

Ground Rules for Producing a Climate of Trust

- *Accept Others.* If we are accepting of each other, we will feel safe in being honest with each other.
- *Speak For Yourself.* We cannot accurately speak for anyone other than ourselves. No one else can accurately speak for us.
- *Avoid Put-Downs.* Our goal is to support — not criticize — either seriously or in fun.
- *It's Okay to Pass.* We will agree to let each person determine the degree to which they can respond — without judging.
- *You Are Responsible.* It will be up to you to determine how much you will be involved and how much you will gain from the experience.

- *Expect Unfinished Business.* Learning and growth are never completed. We are constantly developing skills and uncovering ideas.

Other ground rules and procedures may be added by group members. Remember that it is not necessary for everyone to become best friends. Trust, respect and accountability are the foundations for successful cooperation in the public arena.

Identity

When a new group is being formed, or upon entering a group for the first time, similar problems are encountered by most people. The usual way of interacting with others doesn't work because the situation isn't familiar. Often people hold back, waiting to see what others are going to do. Not only is the situation strange, but it's unclear what other members think is proper behavior. The result is that one feels uncomfortable. In a sense, group members have an identity problem. They know who they are, but not what they are in relation to others in the group.

Acceptance

Other responses to being in a new group are to like and dislike members, and to be unsure of how to present oneself in order to be liked or not rejected. The group does not have clear rules on what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Fear of not being accepted, and the fear of being left out are all important concerns. Identity and acceptance questions create tensions and uneasiness. They are important issues in establishing a group. For this reason it is important that all group members get to know each other and feel comfortable with one another.

Ownership

A group that learns how to work together from the beginning will have ownership in its plans and actions. Group formation indeed takes time. It means hard work for its members. But this very investment also implies their commitment. They are declaring ownership for the group's goals. Ownership of the group and its tasks are critical to the overall success of any project.

Group Work or Teamwork

Being part of a productive community or organization work team can be a very rewarding and fulfilling experience. But what is it that makes some groups develop into a cohesive team? What is the secret of successful teamwork, and how can you develop into productive teams that produce the bonus of greater work output and greater personal satisfaction for everyone?

Teamwork is nothing new. Much of our lives are made up of team activities, even though we may not recognize it. For recreation, we participate in or watch athletic team competition; we spend time with our families, which informally operates as a team; and we participate in religious, political or social groups. All of these usually demonstrate team principles.^{5,6}

The word "synergism" is used to describe what teamwork can accomplish. Synergism means a cooperative action where the total effect is greater than the sum of the effects taken independently. This is the bonus that we can derive from successfully uniting our individual talents.

To fulfill these principles, members may need to adopt different behavioral roles. Real team development does not happen until members begin thinking of the team

goals first, and individual goals second. This is also important in the development of work teams.

Roles of Group Members

The following behavioral roles are described to help develop team spirit:

1. *The involving role:* A team member motivates others by getting them involved in an idea, opportunity, or problem.
2. *The listening role:* A team member makes an effort to actively listen to others, expressing that he or she is really hearing what is being said.
3. *The compromising role:* One member gives up something so that the team can progress.
4. *The supporting role:* A team member gives added dimension to good ideas through his or her support.

Roles of a Group Facilitator

In addition to these roles, a team leader will need to perform additional roles. Key words that describe these roles are:

Guidance — The process of directing the discussion and also providing some structure for planning and action to take place. *Stimulation* — Subtle methods of reinforcing productive team efforts and checking to see if all members are involved in the process.

Coaching — Asking members if they are having problems, giving helpful suggestions and recommending outside resources that may be helpful. It can be done both formally and informally.

Coordination — Checking communication and feedback among team members and indirectly doing things that help produce a harmonious work team.

The leadership role is challenging and somewhat specialized since the leader will need to provide some structure and support while still being a team member. Learning to be an effective team leader will take time and practice. The temptation to revert to a more directive style of leadership is always prevalent in the early stages of growth, but this change could retard team cohesion and limit long-range output.

The early stages of the group or team development is the most critical. Here are some concepts to keep in mind:

- Every team needs a convener or facilitator. Therefore, if this role has not been preassigned, your group will need to get someone to serve, at least temporarily, in this capacity. This position can be rotated to give several participants experience in serving in this kind of leadership role.
- The group members need to know each other.
- In early stages of development, groups will also need some added structure.

This may involve:

- A. Deciding how long meetings will last.
- B. Developing an agenda of items to be covered.
- C. Developing the priority of items to be dealt with.
- D. Assigning team roles such as recorder and timekeeper.
- E. Determining how decision-making will take place — through consensus or voting.

F. Developing an evaluation of the group process and leadership.

- Get the group to discuss and agree on team-meeting ground rules. This gives them experience in working as a group, and also helps members feel they are really an important part of the team. Work to agree on common missions, goals and action plans to give direction and structure. This is hard work, but is essential to accomplishing the group's task.
- Periodically check to see if work is progressing and working relationships are satisfactory. Extra effort may be needed when things bog down or tensions arise.

Comparisons of Productive Groups and Less Productive Groups

PRODUCTIVE	LESS PRODUCTIVE GROUPS
<p><u>COMMUNICATION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purposeful, relevant. 2. Understandable language, common meaning achieved. 3. Different ideas and points of view expressed freely and positively. 4. Feeling expressed directly when essential. 5. People listen and pay attention to one another. 	<p><u>COMMUNICATION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Superficial, irrelevant. 2. Different or specialized language, common meaning not achieved. 3. Differences kept hidden or expressed aggressively. 4. Feelings hidden, expressed indirectly through ideas. 5. People do not listen and all tend to talk at the same time.
<p><u>GOALS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parallel or commonly-shared goals. 2. Use of group for growth; growth purposes clarified and/or understood. 3. Both group and individual goals are permitted and encouraged. 	<p><u>GOALS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individualistic, unshared goals. 2. Use of group for ego-satisfaction. 3. A single group goal is defined and held to at all costs.
<p><u>ATMOSPHERE:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friendly and accepting, but realistic. 2. Collaboration seeking. 3. Authorities analyzed and utilized. 4. Supportive and encouraging of change. 5. Everyone's ideas and suggestions are welcomed. 	<p><u>ATMOSPHERE:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aggressive, hostile or over-friendly, demanding. 2. Prestige seeking. 3. Authorities demanded and accepted. 4. Hostile to change. 5. Some members' ideas don't seem "to count," so these people do not act as if they really belong to the group.

PRODUCTIVE	LESS PRODUCTIVE GROUPS
<p>RESPONSIBILITY AND INVOLVEMENT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group allows and encourages individuals to take responsibility for own growth. 2. Individual is personally identified with the group. The groups continuance and/or function is important to the individual. 3. One or two members are appointed to summarize the discussion and to see that everyone has had a chance to speak. 4. Members understand group decisions & are committed to them. 	<p>RESPONSIBILITY AND INVOLVEMENT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group discourages or denies individual's responsibility for growth—demands independence. 2. Individual is not personally identified with the group—"it's just another group." 3. No one summarizes or checks to see if everyone who wants to speak has actually spoken. Discussions go on and on until people get tired. 4. Decision-making is muddy and people are not committed to the group's plans.
<p>INTERNAL PROCESSES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group changes its method of operation freely and flexibly as needs arise and as group development and growth continues. 2. Group varies in tempo of work and allows itself periods of relaxation. 3. Group feels free to express its moods—excitement, enthusiasm, concern, tension, etc. 4. People discuss the subject at hand. 5. The group uses its agenda as a guide for discussion. 6. Members know and use problem-solving steps. 	<p>INTERNAL PROCESSES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Groups sets up a standard ritual (like "we must always be democratic" or "the leader tells us what to do"). 2. Group demands a constant and continuing level of productivity. 3. Group does not allow any expression of mood other than polite friendliness. 4. The discussion jumps from one idea to another. 5. The agenda is not clear and there is no written guide for discussion. 6. No order is followed for identifying and solving problems.
<p>STANDARDS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All in the group serves as a resource to help the group and each other. 2. Differences which are in the group are useful. 3. Roles are defined, but may easily move from member to member. 4. Member has the chance to try out his or her new insights or skills in the group. 	<p>STANDARDS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only leader or resource persons help others. 2. Differences must be kept "out of sight." 3. Clearly defined and fixed roles are assigned to particular members. 4. Member given no opportunity to test out their new insights or skills.

Builders & Blockers

As we examine groups and observe their behavior, we realize that understanding the process of building groups may take time. Much of our previous training and work experience has stressed competition and individual accomplishment. The following lists describe group behaviors which are either builders or blockers.

BUILDERS

1. Humor
2. Starting on time
3. Short meetings
4. Fun
5. Compromising
6. Similar backgrounds
7. Common goals
8. Enthusiasm
9. Cooperation
10. Assigning a leadership role on a temporary basis (rotating facilitator)
11. Listening
12. Taking an extreme, absurd position to help others realize where they stand
13. Having clear goals which are understood by all
14. Following through and accepting responsibility
15. Alternative ideas
16. Consensus decision-making
17. Respect
18. Defined roles
19. Commitment
20. Flexible structuring
21. Support for others
22. Facilitation rather than leadership
23. Initiative
24. Sensitivity to people's differing needs
25. Trust
26. Being process-oriented, as well as task-oriented

BLOCKERS

1. Not listening
2. Unclear issues
3. Disorganized
4. No facilitator
5. No defined goals and objectives
6. Not buying into goals and objectives
7. Not being involved in decision-making
8. Impatience with group decision-making process
9. Being afraid to speak up at a meeting because of what other might say
10. Using words and jargon that some members might not understand
11. Lack of information
12. No prepared agenda
13. Suppressing conflict
14. Rejecting other's ideas without hearing them out
15. Animosity and dislike in the group
16. Inflexible group structure
17. Lack of planning
18. Time pressures
19. Outside pressures
20. Ego
21. Pushy people
22. Hidden agenda/self-interest
23. Lack of well-defined roles
24. False humor or too much humor

Summary

Groups may be loosely structured or a formal organization. But whatever the type, this “collection of individuals” needs to feel included and important in the workings of the group. Developing trust within the members will create a good social environment, and progress toward the group’s goals will follow.

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A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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**UNIT III:
Group/
Organizational
Leadership
Skills**

Module 2: Effective Meetings

Would you plan a bus or airplane trip without consulting a schedule of times and destinations? Probably not. A meeting agenda is your group's schedule of departure and arrival. It marks the way toward achievement of goals.

What's going to happen at the next meeting? What business will be discussed? What issues will require a decision? Will someone give an informational report? Don't be taken by surprise at your meeting...Plan! First prepare a list of what business to discuss. The list should name only items that require the attention of the membership. Next, consider how items will be presented, what to discuss, and how to present it. Remember that all of the group can and should be involved in planning and participating at meetings.

The Agenda

An agenda is a step-by-step order of points to be covered. A tentative agenda should be sent to all members prior to the meeting:

- To insure that important business is not overlooked.
- To remind people of the meeting.
- To help members identify important items and prepare to discuss them.
- To help members focus on issues, to contribute, and to feel a sense of progress.
- To insure meetings start on time, move forward and stop on time.

Developing the Agenda

Days or even weeks before the meeting, the facilitator, chairperson, or presiding officer should begin preparing the agenda. This person should review program plans and actively involve other officers, chairs, and group members who may have items of business to offer.^{1,2}

Expected Action

Agendas that are too brief or vague can actually hinder the progress of a meeting. Properly prepared agendas, on the other hand, almost always make meetings run smoothly. In a well-prepared agenda, items are elaborated. For example: An item listed simply as "Fairboard Report" doesn't tell us very much; adding "select representatives and consider alternative date" says more. Be certain to indicate the expected action for each item. Here are some common phrases for conveying expected action: "for information," "for discussion," and "for decision." These phrases will help members anticipate and prepare for the action. If a particular person has responsibility for an item, place that person's name in parentheses just below or to the right of the item. This information tells members who the contact person is and serves as a guide for the chair.¹

Setting Priorities

The order of items can be critical to the success of a meeting. For some items, the order is obvious. For example, you usually don't discuss the budget for equipment purchases before you discuss your equipment needs. Some agenda orders, however,

are not so obvious. Informal meetings for planning or problem solving may benefit from these suggestions.

Guidelines to Help Establish Priorities

1. The early part of a meeting is usually the most lively and creative. Therefore, items requiring mental energy, bright ideas and clear heads should appear early on the agenda. An item of great interest to everyone might be scheduled for 15 or 20 minutes into the meeting to avoid the attention lag that typically occurs at this point and to involve any late arrivals.
2. The order of items influences the meeting atmosphere. Some items tend to unite the group, while others divide it. The leader may want to start on a point of unity, progress to items likely to evoke differing opinions, and end the meeting on a unifying note.
3. Long agendas require momentum, because members need to feel that progress is being made. Use your labels of “information,” “decision” and “discussion” to help set the agenda. Information items should come first or last. Since they require no group action, they should be brief. Decision items should come early on the agenda. If a decision item becomes a discussion, table it until you are ready for the discussion items. This procedure may not cover the entire agenda, but it will keep the meeting on track and leave members with a feeling of accomplishment.
4. The order of items can save valuable time. Listing “Any Other Business” on the agenda may save time in planning, but it can turn into a frustrating waste of time. Unstructured or informal discussion is healthy, but it must be managed so that it comes near the close of a meeting and only if time permits.

Using the Agenda

Copies of the agenda should be distributed to all members several days before the meeting. Minutes from the last meeting or an abbreviated set of minutes listing decisions and needed action should also be distributed when possible.

The meeting agenda must be flexible and open to revision. Early in the meeting, the presiding officer should ask the group to review the agenda. Have any pressing issues been omitted? Is there need for some revision? When making revisions, consider the time available. Do not lengthen the meeting time; instead, decide which items can be deferred to a later date.

When it comes to time, flexibility can be more of a hindrance than a help. Time is important to most people. Therefore, you should start and stop at the time specified on your agenda. Starting late penalizes people who arrive on time, and makes it difficult to end on time. Repeated late starts encourage people to arrive at a later time and to form bad habits. Meetings that drag on past the ending time can contribute to feelings of guilt, resentment, impatience and tension. Schedule breaks during long meetings.

Information Sent with the Agenda Should Indicate:

1. The name of the group.
2. The title or topic of the meeting.
3. The name and phone number of a contact person.
4. The time, date and location.

5. The decision-making method to be used.
 - Majority Rule (most people have to agree)
 - Consensus (all people have to agree or at least be willing to support the decision)

Agenda Items for Formal Meetings Should Include:

1. Call to order.
2. Reading and approval of the minutes from the last meeting.
3. Reports of officers and standing committees.
4. Reports of special committees.
5. Unfinished business.
6. New business.
7. Adjournment.

Preparing for a Meeting

Learning and working will be at their best when everyone is comfortable and relaxed. Participants should feel that the time they have spent at the meeting is worthwhile. Although no one can guarantee that all meetings will be regarded as meaningful, the chair or facilitator can take some steps to make the meeting as effective as possible by carefully arranging for facilities and materials, as well as a comfortable social environment.²

Physical Setting

Participants in meetings will contribute more and get more out of the meeting if the physical setting is comfortable and the atmosphere is informal, supportive and relaxed. Desirable physical arrangements will vary depending on the size of the group and the purpose for which the meeting has been called. Informal room arrangements are recommended to make everyone feel reasonably comfortable and equal in the group.

Pre-Arrangements

If at all possible, check the meeting room in advance. Some rooms just are not suitable. They might make an undesirable impression on the group members or require exceptional arrangements.

Arrive 20 to 30 minutes early to check that arrangements have been completed. This will also allow you to make any corrections if necessary.

Name Tags or Table Tents

If group members are unfamiliar with each other, name tags or table tents are important. They will speed the development of group cohesiveness since participants will be able to use names in addressing each other. To be useful they should be large enough to read across the table. Made with magic marker on light paper, they can be pinned to the person or set on the table in front of them.

Room Arrangements

Select a room that is large enough for several small groups to meet simultaneously or to accommodate a single, large group. If possible, select a room with furniture that can be moved easily, especially if a rearrangement for small group discussions seems likely.

In small groups (up to 20 people) chairs can be arranged so that everyone is facing each other. It is important for each participant to have plenty of space in which to sit and work, take notes, or spread papers for notebooks and handouts. Tables should be available, unless it is a very short or very active meeting.

To accommodate a large group, rows are a better arrangement. Curving the rows in a half moon shape with ends closer to the front, improves this. Make sure extra chairs are available to accommodate a larger than expected crowd.

In a small group, the facilitator can sit among the group members. In a larger group, the facilitator may stand so that he or she can see the group and also be seen by the group. Avoid a head table at informal meetings since it emphasizes the “power role” of the facilitator through its physical separation. It also indicates a larger difference in status than if the facilitator is standing in front of the group without lectern or table as a barrier.

Determine how you can regulate the temperature and ventilation. As the meeting progresses, someone may need to make adjustments to keep the room comfortable.

Materials

It is necessary to have a chalkboard, newsprint pad or overhead projector for writing that is to be visible to the entire group. Don't forget the appropriate writing equipment (chalk, magic markers, writing pens, etc.)

The speaker or facilitator may want to use visual aids. Double check equipment needs such as an overhead projector, slide projector, tape recorder, etc. Extension cords, spare bulbs, and a small table to hold the equipment and visual aids should also be on hand.

Access

Make sure you have keys to open all of the rooms that will be used during the meeting. Locate the restrooms and a telephone which are accessible to meeting participants.

Social Setting

The social or emotional environment describes the way group members, including the leader or facilitator, relate to one another. Trust and respect are among the most important foundations of the social environment for a group. Many group building techniques can be used to build this foundation.

Refreshments build group togetherness and congeniality. Food and beverages should be prepared ahead of time so that they are available when the first person enters the room or the break starts. Make sure there are enough napkins, cups and paper plates on hand.

How to Run a Better Business Meeting:

The Facilitator of the group is responsible for conducting meetings, guiding discussion, and making sure that the group is using effective processes for doing its work.

The fundamental difference between a Chairperson and a Facilitator is the directiveness of the Chairperson role. The Chairperson makes rulings, determines procedures, rules people out of order, etc. The Facilitator proposes, suggests, invites,

and then consults with the participants to generate a consensus. The Facilitator's "power" comes from the group. An effective Chairperson will follow many of these same procedures.^{3,4}

Leadership Roles

Group Leader: The group leader is responsible for conducting meetings, guiding discussions, and making sure that the group is using processes for doing its work.

Secretary or Recorder: The role of the secretary is to record the meeting notes while performing the role of a group member.

Time Keeper: The time keeper assists the group leader with the enforcement of time frames established for agenda items, in addition to performing a regular group member role.

Monitor: In the formative stages of group development, it may be helpful to ask one group member to monitor the group process. An evaluation form is helpful for this meeting.

The Facilitator should be conscious of the potential to dominate the group, and try to control such tendencies. The Facilitator should avoid talking a lot, not argue intensely with group members. If this is not possible, a more neutral facilitator should be chosen. He or she should also try to draw everyone into group deliberations and be sure that everyone's comments are recorded.

Below is a list of things a Facilitator has to be concerned about, as well as ways they can handle each situation:^{1, 3, 4}

1. Keep the meeting focused on the topic:
 - Point out that the discussion has drifted. Usually the meeting will quickly return to the topic.
 - Watch the timing.
2. Clarify and accept communication:
 - Summarize the contributions of participants. Summarize in particular, the contributions of participants who have not been actively involved. "Your feeling is that..."
 - Relate one participant's idea to another. "If I understand it correctly, your idea would add on to Tracy's by..."
 - Accept incomplete ideas. "Could you develop that idea a little more?"
 - Point out when a group member's contribution is cut off and invite him or her to complete it. "I'm afraid that we may have cut Kelly off. Did you have more you wanted to contribute, Kelly?"
3. Accept feeling as valid data:
 - Summarize feelings as well as content. "You feel angry when..."
 - See that ground rules are followed.
4. State a problem in a constructive way so that group members can work on a solution:
 - State the problem in such a way that it doesn't sound like blame-fixing or an accusation of the participants. Reframe issues if needed.
 - State problems, not solutions. Often asking a question is useful.

- Help clarify the areas of decision making. “As I understand it, the Wilderness Act does not allow for development of recreation areas: however, it is open to us to recommend classification of this land.”
5. Suggest a procedure or problem-solving approach:
 - Point out when it may be useful to move on to the next problem. “I’m wondering if we’re ready to move on to…”
 - Develop a visible way to make notes for later discussion.
 6. Summarize and clarify direction:
 - Summarize your understanding of what the meeting has accomplished and indicate what the next steps will be.
 - When delegating tasks, be sure the “delegatee” agrees to accept the responsibility and the time frame.
 7. Avoid dominating behaviors:
 - Critiquing of ideas.
 - Making procedural decisions without group consent.
 - Exploiting his or her role to propose or argue for positions.
 - Providing lengthy comments.

Conducting the Meeting^{1, 2}

1. Call the meeting to order promptly.
2. Introduce the members and guests. Consider a group building/get acquainted activity instead of formal introductions for less formal meetings.
3. With cooperation of group participants, establish priorities and decide how much time to spend on each agenda item. Ask the group for additional agenda items.
4. Keep the group focused on the subject. This can be accomplished by monitoring the discussion and informing the group when it strays from the agenda.
5. Have the group follow the time commitments for each agenda item. A two-minute overtime may be allowed for those agenda items not completed in the allotted time. During this overtime period, the agenda item should either be completed or assigned as an agenda item for the next meeting.
6. Be attuned to, and help avoid confusion through ground rules. Present the agenda on newsprint or chalkboard. When possible, specify how many minutes can be spent on each topic and who will speak. If anyone takes up too much time on one topic, you can remind the group that they need to stay on schedule. This will help move the discussion along.
 - If there is hostility about subjects to be discussed in the meeting, bring it out in the open immediately. For example, you could say, “I’m well aware that there are strong feelings about matters on the agenda today. I know some of you are not happy to be here. I understand how you feel in these circumstances.” They should know that you do indeed understand.
 - Keep discussion lively and moving.
7. At the end of each agenda item:
 - Check to be sure that everyone who wanted to talk was able to contribute to the discussion.
 - Summarize or ask someone else to summarize. Make sure the secretary also records the summary.

8. Conduct or ask someone to conduct a feedback session during the last ten minutes of the meeting. Ask the following questions:
 - Did we accomplish our goals for the meeting?
 - What remains to be done?
 - Was any time wasted? If so, when and how?
9. Schedule the next meeting time.
10. Call the meeting to a close.
 - RE-CAP (if meeting needs to be continued at another time). At the end of the meeting, give a summary of what has transpired. Be positive and make sure the next steps are understood by the group. After the meeting, notes of relevant discussion and action plans which were decided upon should be recorded and distributed to the participants. This will serve as another reminder of responsibilities and assignments. It also becomes a permanent record of actions taken.¹

After the Meeting

1. See that the meeting room is left clean.
2. Check with the secretary for clarity of minutes.
3. Transfer leftover agenda items to the agenda for the next meeting.
4. Send thank-you notes to guest speakers.
5. Distribute copies of the minutes.
6. Conduct any correspondence necessary for carrying out agenda items.
7. Contact any speakers identified for the next meeting.

Sharing Responsibilities

The facilitator's role is to really make sure all the essential tasks get done smoothly. Others can and should carry out some of the work.

Committees

Contrary to what some critics claim, committees don't have to be "many-headed monsters." Committees can open avenues for sharing work and responsibility among group members. Given realistic goal-setting and careful selection of members and leaders, committees can achieve a great deal.

Unless a specific committee job can be stated in writing, a committee is probably unnecessary. Confusion and vagueness about a committee's purpose can lead to frustration. Do not appoint a committee to do a task better accomplished by one person. Re-examine each existing committee and, if necessary, redefine its purpose or eliminate it.¹

If a committee is proposed, you must be able to answer these questions:

- Why should the committee be established?
- What is its job?
- What are its responsibilities and limitations?
- When should the committee's job be completed?
- What is the budget?
- What other resource are needed and what resources are already available?

It is the parent group's responsibility to define the committee's purpose and specify its limitations and responsibilities. A clear understanding of these factors enables

committee members to function more effectively. In new situations, a group may have to develop its own goals within a broad framework.

Standing and Special Committees

Standing committees are reappointed regularly to handle ongoing concerns. Examples include membership, finance, publicity and program committees. Special committees are *ad hoc*. They are appointed as needed to accomplish special objectives within a specified period of time. They rarely exist longer than eighteen months. Examples include a special project committee, a building committee, and a one-time special event committee.

Committee Members: Selection and Orientation

Selecting a committee member for a particular job is more effective than asking for volunteers. Selection enables you to consider the skills and interests of available people and to ensure that the group is neither too large, nor too small to get the job done. Committees of five to nine people usually work well. Some committees have as few as three members; others have more than fifteen. When the size approaches fifteen, consider selecting subcommittees or dividing the task among several smaller committees of equal standing.

Orienting the committee is usually the responsibility of the committee chair. Members must understand the committee's purpose and specific assignment. They need to know what is expected of them individually and as a group.

For a committee to be effective, members must accept responsibility. As a member, never accept a committee assignment unless you have sufficient time and interest.

Committees should be appointed when a job is too large for one person. Committees can help define an issue, resolve a complex problem that requires several perspectives, and involve group members in the work of the organization. Planning ahead is a key element for successful committees. With proper planning, committees can reduce the workload of an organization's chair or president.

Committee Chair: Selection and Orientation

Chairing a committee means coordinating committee activities. The chair must see to it that the job is completed and that work and leadership roles are fairly distributed among committee members.

Select a chair who is a team worker—someone who is interested in the job to be done and who can motivate the committee to do it.

Train the person chairing the committee. People are often told, "Take the job; there's nothing to it." This approach is both unwise and unproductive. Orientation should acquaint the chair with the specific purpose and duties of the committee, how the committee fits into the overall organization, and what will happen to the committee "product." Consider how the person's interests and skills can be used in chairing a committee. Giving people an outlet for their abilities show them how their personal involvement can help the group. Reverse the usual pattern: Rather than trying to make the person fit the job, build the job around the person's skills and interests.

Building the Committee Agenda

An effective committee needs an agenda. A step-by-step outline is occasionally enough, but more often a detailed agenda is necessary. Generalized goals are too vague and provide little direction for committee members. Detailed agendas bring items into clearer focus. Items must be specific, measurable, and realistic. Poor agendas are the biggest cause of committee failures.

Follow Through Responsibilities

The committee should write a short (one-page) report when requested, when major jobs are completed, or annually. The report should describe how the job was carried out, give suggestions for the next committee, and discuss both successes and failures.

The organization has the responsibility of responding to committees' efforts. Regularly filing committee reports shows acceptance and requires no further action, but does not necessarily imply agreement. Approving or adopting a committee report shows that the group agrees to follow the recommendations in the report. Finally, the parent organization must give the committee feedback concerning the usefulness of its work. Feedback should include how the report or recommendations were used and what results the committee's work achieved.

Choosing the Specific Site

1. Consider the possible rooms within the selected location.
2. Make sure the site is appropriate for the structure you plan to use to obtain meeting objectives.

SITE SELECTION CHECKLIST	YES	NO
1. Is the size of the room suitable for the number of meeting participants?		
2. Are the chairs in the room appropriate? Are they comfortable?		
3. Are the temperature controls visible?		
4. Is there someone available to help set up the room?		
5. Do you know where the light switches are?		
6. Do you have adequate light sockets and extension cords?		
7. Is there space to hang up completed wall charts?		
8. Are there drapes that close on the windows?		
9. Does the room provide clear views for visual aids?		
10. Is the room located away from kitchens, hallways and coffee-break areas?		

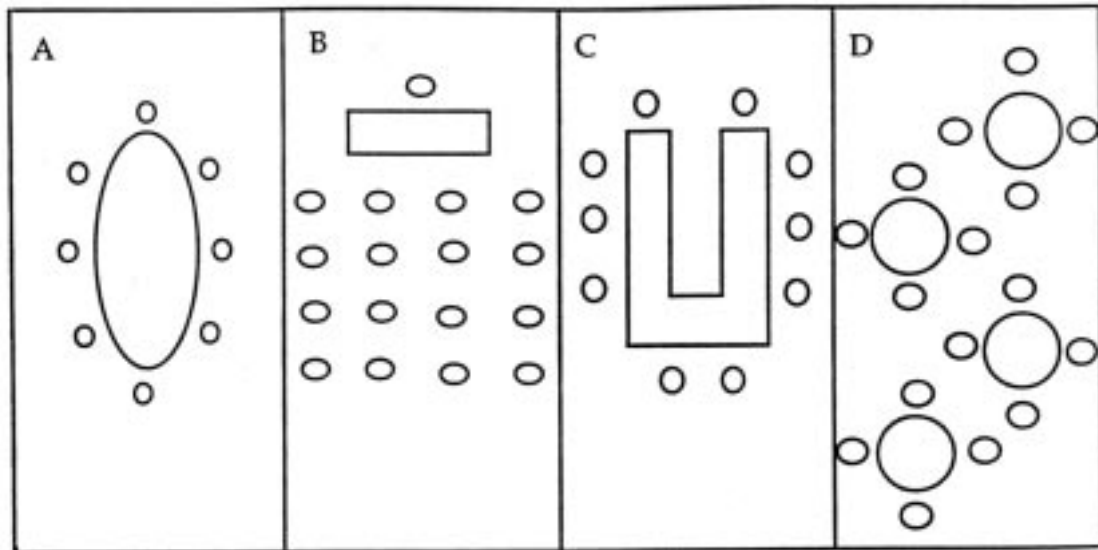
Effective Meeting Planning Sheet

Session Number/Title	Date:		
Purpose or Objectives	Time: Location:		
Committee(s) Involved: Members:	Chair(s) of Committee:		
Facilitator(s) for the Session:			
TASKS	SPECIFICS	WHO WILL DO IT?	(By) WHEN?
FACILITIES (check the following): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central location • Large room (so small groups can meet at the same time) • Can walls be used to post newsprint? • Can temperature & ventilation be controlled? • Can lighting be controlled? • Enough tables & chairs available? • Can the furniture be moved around freely? 			
ACCESS (check the following): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keys available to all areas that will be used • Restrooms are accessible • A phone is available • Adequate parking 			
MATERIALS (check the following): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microphone set up & working? • Enough easels/chalkboards? • Markers & chalk? • Newsprint & tape? • Overhead projector? • Audio/video tape recorder? 			
PUBLICITY/PROMOTION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute brochures/fliers to public places • Distribute news releases to local newspaper & media • Media contact with reporters • Arrange for pictures 			
REGISTRATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction map • Parking permits • Name tags & tent sign if using a panel of speakers 			
FOOD/REFRESHMENTS			
TRANSPORTATION (if needed)			
BUDGET/FINANCES			
AGENDAS/PROGRAM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select & contact speakers or other resource people • Handouts, questionnaires, notebook information • Paper, pencils, pens 			
CERTIFICATES/AWARDS			
FOLLOW UP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation(s) • Thank You's 			
OTHER TASKS (list): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Exhibits • Door Prizes • Speaker Gifts 			

Room Setups

Using the diagrams below, think about which room alignment:

- Suggests “we talk, you listen” or “you talk, we listen.”
- Implies participation and work to be done by audience.
- Will allow for maximum participation by the most people in the shortest amount of time (people talk to each other).
- Will allow an “axe grinder” the largest audience.
- Fosters confrontation among diverse or polarized interests.
- Will allow input from all participants on an equal level.
- Will allow a maximum quantity of information to be presented in a short time.



In what ways does the arrangement of the room affect the kind of interaction communication that takes place in a meeting?

Chairs and tables arranged so that people can easily see one another foster communications — both talking and listening — among the audience or group members. Round tables suggest that people may work in small groups on activities or tasks. People talk to each other easily at round tables.

A formal arrangement, such as a head table, often implies that the person at the table is in charge or is someone invited to provide information. This is the typical arrangement for a lecture. The audience will be more comfortable if tables are provided for them, rather than just chairs in the classroom manner. An “axe grinder” can express opinions easily with this arrangement. For a smaller group, a large rectangular table plus a head table can be used, although this creates distance between the leader and the group members.

The U shape arrangement also makes it easy for everyone to sit and talk to one another. However, if there are two distinct and opposing sides, the facilitator should assign seats so people with one interest are not seated together on one side and all the people with the opposing interest on the other side.

A large oval table also promotes discussion and equal participation. A rectangular table can be used in this way also, but it is more difficult for everyone to see one another.

The herringbone arrangement is similar to the classroom set-up with tables. The tables are slanted and a center aisle is left through the center for easier access. Visibility and participation are somewhat better because some people can see others clearly.

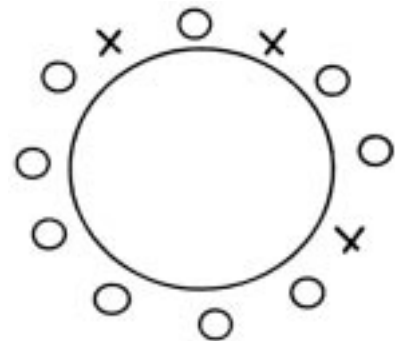
The doughnut is another word for a circle of chairs where everyone faces one another. This arrangement promotes communication but people may have difficulty in taking notes or writing on newsprint.

The office desk arrangement may be suitable for just a few people, although it's hard for people on both sides to read things. The desk often is regarded as a barrier or power symbol. It's usually better to figure out a way for everyone to sit on the same side of the desk or table.

Consider the following when arranging chairs:

- Face chairs and people away from doors and windows when possible.
- Beware of energy holes. Begin with too few seats rather than too many.
- You may want to block off the back rows at the beginning of a meeting to get people to sit toward the front.

X = Empty Chair: Empty Chair = Energy Hole



ROOM SETUP	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
1. CLASSROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allows for many people. b. Leader is clearly in charge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourages one-way communication. b. Encourages side-bar conversations. c. Hard to hear in back of room.
2. U SHAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Convenient for 6-20 people. b. Easy for leader to have eye contact with all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discourages small group team-building. b. Reduces getting to know other people. c. Limits movement of leader.
3. ROUNDTABLES — PARTICIPATORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Builds teams. b. Easy for leader to move around. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increases side-bar conversations. b. Requires wide room.
4. HERRINGBONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allows use of tables for many people. b. Creates center aisle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hard to hear in back of room. b. Creates impersonal mood.
5. CIRCLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hard to select a leadership position. b. Good morale for people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hard to select a leadership position.
6. RECTANGLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Good for staff meetings. b. Leader can assert control in front of the room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Limits number of people to size of table. b. Encourages discussion.
7. FOCUSED RECTANGLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creates leadership position. b. Allows for more people than a rectangle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creates distance between the leader and group.
8. DOUGHNUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Equalizes status of group members. b. Easy to see everyone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Limits number of people to size of doughnut.
9. OFFICE/DESK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creates authority. b. Allows intimacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Can be seen as threatening.

CONSIDER THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AND THE PHYSICAL POSSIBILITIES, THEN MAKE THE BEST ARRANGEMENT YOU CAN IN THE SITUATION.

Summary

An effective meeting begins with a well-prepared agenda and a comfortable physical setting. Learning will be best when the participants are relaxed and the facilitator is well organized and aware of roles. With proper planning, committees have a vital function in the work of a group. The more aware participants are of their roles, the more likely the desired results will be achieved.

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A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT III: Group/ Organizational Leadership Skills

Module 3: Group Decisions

Every group makes decisions. The way a group makes decisions influences how people feel about the group. It can also determine how well the group members support the decision, as well as how they convey their support to others.

Groups make decisions regarding their functions and purposes, plans and programs, community projects and political activities. The level of group agreement affects the feelings various group members have when decisions are being made. The way a group feels after making a decision becomes especially important if the group plans to have a continuing positive relationship.

It is increasingly difficult today to solve many problems for two reasons. (1) the complexity of the issues facing organizations and communities, and (2) the number and diversity of people who expect to participate in making decisions.

Steps in Decision-Making

The general decision-making process involves a sequence of steps. Group facilitators and members should:

1. Recognize the problem or opportunity. The process begins with recognizing a possible need for change.
2. Analyze the situation. Once a difference is recognized between “what is” and “what could be,” study the situation carefully to determine exactly what is causing the difference.
3. Consider the goal or goals you want to reach. The goals you choose are influenced by the values you have — what you believe is important. Becoming more aware of your values and the priorities you put on them helps you see more clearly what is desired.
4. Look for alternatives. Look for as many alternatives as possible to solve your problem — not just the obvious or habitual ones. Creative thinking, reading and talking to other people may uncover more possibilities.
5. Consider the consequences. One of the key elements of the decision-making process is looking ahead to see “what might happen if we do this.” Consider the use of resources: how much time, energy, skill, money, knowledge, resources are required?
6. Select the best alternative. Look at the alternatives and select the one that seems best for you. If there is no “best” alternative, or none seems satisfactory, perhaps a new alternative can be made by combining some of the possibilities.
7. Act upon the decision. Making a decision doesn’t end with choosing the best alternative — it must also be put into action.

8. Accept the responsibility for the decision. Most decisions are made under conditions of uncertainty, imperfect knowledge and limited resources. You do “the best you can with what you’ve got.”
9. Evaluate the results. The outcome or results of decisions should be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.⁵

Decision-Making Processes

The following information will provide details on two very different decision-making processes, parliamentary procedure and consensus agreement

Parliamentary Procedure

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to help a group transact business efficiently, protect the rights of the individual, and preserve a spirit of harmony.¹

Some groups avoid parliamentary procedure because they assume it is too complex. Others assume that they need a “professional parliamentarian.” Both assumptions are wrong. A basic knowledge can make parliamentary procedure work for your group.

Most of us belong to one or more organizations which use parliamentary procedure, and we need at least a basic knowledge of the correct procedures. Parliamentary procedure is to help a group transact business efficiently, protect the rights of the individual, and preserve a spirit of harmony.

Everyone in the group must know parliamentary procedure in order for it to work. When some know it and others do not, the rules can actually prevent participation. Even the most formal meetings have a provision for clarifying procedural confusion. Under this provision, called “rising to a point of order,” anyone can ask the chair to explain exactly what’s going on. If the chair or some other “expert” cannot explain the procedure to everyone’s satisfaction, then it is best to begin with a simple motion. Don’t hesitate to request a clarification of procedure at any time. If you understand what’s going on, but see that a number of people do not, ask for clarification.

Principles

Parliamentary law is simple in principle. It is based on common sense and courtesy:

- Only one person speaks at a time.
- Every member has equal rights.
- Each item presented is entitled to discussion time.
- The decisions of the majority are upheld, but the rights of the minority to offer dissenting opinions and differing views are respected. Most groups get along very well with relatively informal procedures. However, the larger the group or the “hotter” the issue, the more important a carefully planned procedure is.

The Standard Order

Groups often establish a standard order of business to give members a sense of security. Knowing what to expect allows members to focus on relevant issues rather than try to anticipate the unknown. The following agenda outline is commonly used.²

1. Call to Order:

“Will the meeting please come to order?”

2. Reading and Approval of the Minutes:

“Will the secretary please read the minutes of the last meeting?” “Are there any corrections to the minutes of the last meeting?” “There being no corrections, the minutes will stand approved as read.”

3. Officers’ Reports:

- a. President — announcements, discussion of agendas and important agenda items, time limits, “ground rules,” welcomes, introductions.
- b. Vice president — reports or comments.
- c. Treasurer — given and filed at each meeting, but differs from other officers’ reports in that it does not receive formal approval until it has been audited.

4. Standing Committees’ Reports:

Standing committees are those that are reappointed year to year.

5. Special Committees’ Reports:

These are special-project or one-time reports prepared by ad hoc committees.

6. Unfinished or Postponed Business:

This item is often included in committees’ or officers’ reports.

7. Old Business:

If unfinished business is included in officers’ and committees’ reports, no further old business may need to be discussed.

8. New Business:

Ask the group if there is any new business to come before the meeting.

9. Announcements:

10. Adjournment:

Group decisions with substantive content are generally required in the “Business” sections of the agenda.

Motions

The main motion is the basic tool in formal decision-making. To introduce a motion, a member should first receive recognition from the chair and then state the motion. Motions should begin with the phrase, “I move that . . .” Another member, without waiting to be recognized, may say, “I second the motion.” Seconding indicates that at least one other person wants the group to consider the matter. When a motion is seconded, the chair restates it and opens the matter for discussion. Members must be recognized by the chair before speaking to a motion. Normally, the first person who asks for recognition is entitled to speak. However, when several members wish to speak at the same time, certain guiding principles should determine the chair’s decision.

1. The chair should always show preference to the person who proposes the motion.
2. Generally, the chair should show preference to members who have not yet spoken and to those who seldom speak.
3. If the chair knows the opinions of the various members, he or she should alternate between members who favor the measure and those who oppose it.
4. The chair should confine discussion to what is before the group — the motion!

Kinds of Motions

For most groups, motions are not complicated. Even so, you should be aware of the five types of motions:

A *MAIN MOTION* introduces an action to the group. It is always debatable and amendable. Only one main motion may be “on the floor” at a time.

A *SUBSIDIARY MOTION* proposes to alter, postpone, or temporarily dispose of other motions, usually main motions. Amendments, referring to committee, and tabling are subsidiary motions.

An *INCIDENTAL MOTION* originates in another motion and affects the process of conducting business. Such a motion must be disposed of before action can be taken on the original motion. Motions to close nominations, to rise to a point of order, or to establish a method of voting are common incidental motions.

A *RENEWAL MOTION* lets the assembly bring a previous motion back to the floor for reconsideration. Example: taking from the table and reconsidering.

A *PRIVILEGED MOTION* is an action of the entire assembly, such as taking a recess or adjourning.

Amendments

When someone thinks the right topic is before the group, but would like to see the wording modified, he or she can propose an amendment. The purpose of an amendment is to change a motion already under consideration. After the discussion, the amendment is discussed and voted on. Then the group votes on the motion as amended.

Technically, a motion can be amended, and the amendment to the motion can be amended, but no further amendments may be made. If more amendments are needed, the motion was probably badly phrased in the first place. In such cases, it is better to withdraw the original motion and start with a new one.

Following is an example of how amendments are proposed and voted on:

FIRST MEMBER RECOGNIZED BY THE CHAIR: “I move that we purchase a new coffeemaker.”

ANOTHER MEMBER: “I second the motion.”

CHAIR: “It has been moved and seconded that the committee follow through with its report and buy a new coffeemaker. Any discussion?”

MEMBER RECOGNIZED BY THE CHAIR: “I move that we amend the motion to read, ‘a new drip coffeemaker’.”

ANOTHER MEMBER: “I second the amendment.”

CHAIR: “Is there any discussion on the amendment to add the word drip before

the word coffeemaker?” (Following the discussion, the chair may sense that the group is ready to vote, and say, “Are you ready to vote on the amendment?” The amendment is then voted on.)

CHAIR: “Since the amendment to the motion was passed, we will now vote on the amended motion which reads, “we shall purchase a new drip coffeemaker.” Is there any discussion? If not, we shall proceed to vote. All in favor say yes. All opposed no. The motion as amended is passed.”

Important Points and Terms

- Introduce complicated ideas by discussion; uncomplicated ideas, by motions. This practice eliminates the need for most amendments.
- Unless stated otherwise in the constitution and by-laws, the chair has the right to vote.
- A QUORUM is the number of persons who must be present at a meeting to take legal action on business matters. This number is usually specified in the bylaws.
- Most motions require a simple majority for passage. If a higher percentage is required, the chair or parliamentarian should tell the group what that percentage is.
- To TABLE a motion means to delay action on it. Unless a specific time is given for removing a tabled motion, the motion automatically comes back for consideration at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- Occasionally, as the discussion begins to lag, a member of the group may call “QUESTION.” Some take this as a mandate to move on a vote. It is not. The chair should call for further discussion and decide if it is time to vote.

Calling “question” is sometimes confused with the very formal parliamentary motion, “I call for the previous question,” which is a motion requiring the end of discussion. This motion requires a second, is not debatable or amendable, and requires a two-thirds majority to pass. If the motion is passed, the chair must move immediately to vote on the main motion (without discussion). If the motion calling for the previous question fails, discussion of the main motion resumes.

Consensus Decision-Making

Consensus decision-making is a way of working together, a way in which everyone’s values and interests can be considered. It is a process of coming to an agreement on a particular problem or issue.³

A meeting conducted by consensus is less formal than using parliamentary procedure. A problem or opportunity for the group is brought up for discussion, without requiring a formal motion. The group discusses the suggestion, working toward clarifying the issues and the need for action. The leader/facilitator encourages input from all and then guides the group toward making a decision. A formal motion is not made, but the leader states the consensus agreement and checks to make sure everyone is willing to support the decision.

In a consensus process, different interests work together to identify issues, to educate each other about their concerns, to generate options, and then to reach agreements that all sides can accept. This does not mean that all sides will be equally enthusiastic about a solution; rather, participants recognize that it is the best solution

available.

In consensus decision-making, the group can take no action that is not consented to by all members. Consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity, where everyone is of one mind and in full agreement with a decision, although it may. Everyone must agree that they can “live with” and support the decision. Consensus happens as a synthesis of values and ideas rather than one side winning. The consensus decision-making process is different from the use of parliamentary procedures and accepting the vote of the majority. Voting results in a “win-lose situation.” Sometimes the losers are unwilling to support the winning position, which hampers implementation of the decision.^{3,4}

Why Use the Consensus Process?

Open communication. People talk with one another regarding their perceptions of the situation, the issues associated with the problem, their concerns and needs, and their ideas about possible solutions. Problems are clearly identified. This exchange provides the basis for designing workable and acceptable alternatives.

More informed decisions. Drawing on the thinking of a diverse group usually encourages greater creativity and a larger number of options. Several options may be combined to make a more satisfactory decision.

Acceptance of the outcome. People who have worked together to understand the issues and who have developed solutions using consensus will see the reasoning behind a recommendation or solution. Seldom will they challenge the results of a consensus decision.

Faster implementation. The process sets the stage for an action plan — Who, What, When, Where and How. People will not block implementation if they understand that a plan reflects their interests.

Creation of new networks. Participants establish a constructive relationship with one another that serves the organization or community into the future. As new issues surface, individuals are more likely to contact one another to discuss and initiate joint problem solving activities.

Cooperative effort. Consensus is a cooperative group effort and all members have a share in the decision. Members are given the opportunity to propose changes, thus helping the group to reach a decision.

When to Use Consensus Decision-Making

Consensus decision-making is an appropriate way to make group decisions. The process can work well whether the group is small or large. With a large group, a sequence of small group discussions is used. Reaching consensus takes more time than just voting, but the outcome is often worth it. The group leader must be willing to share control; group members must be willing to express their views honestly.⁵

The process is especially useful when:

- People must work together over a period of time.
- An issue is complex.
- Many parties are involved.
- The issues are negotiable.

- People are willing to participate.
- The concept of a losing side is undesirable.

There are times when consensus approaches are not appropriate, such as when:

- The group is facing an emergency and quick action is needed.
- The timing is not right, relevant information is not available, or there is not enough time to achieve a consensus decision given mandated deadlines.
- Legal clarification is needed.
- The group is so polarized that productive face-to-face discussions are not possible.
- The level of concern about the issue is not great.

Implementing Solutions

A consensus agreement must also address how the recommendations will be implemented. Along with a description of what is to be done, an agreement should also specify how each decision will be implemented, who will be responsible, what tasks are expected, within what period of time the tasks are to be completed, and where the resources will be obtained.

Negotiating Decisions

Dealing with both your interests and the other person's or group's interest is the basis for negotiating a satisfactory agreement.

In focusing on interest as opposed to positions, be sure and recognize that behind everyone's position are interests that are both compatible as well as conflicting. The idea of successful negotiation is to find those interests in common. Pay attention to their interests, ideas, and choices, and generate as many multiple interests as possible.

Separate the people from the problem

Many times people confuse the problem with the personal relationship. When people become angry on a personal level, it is very difficult to reach any kind of solution even though everyone would benefit from the solution. Using your relationship as leverage will tend to damage any on-going commitment from the other party. When a people-problem has developed, this should be dealt with directly, independently, not as part of the decision that needs to be negotiated.⁶

Listen to understand

In trying to differentiate the problem from the people it is important that you try to listen and understand what is being said in the meeting. When you talk you should focus on being understood rather than just making your point. People are less defensive if you talk about yourself rather than them. For example, "I am feeling uncomfortable," rather than, "You seem to be feeling uncomfortable." People are more willing to share their feelings, if you can be straightforward about yours.

Try to understand the framework in which the other person is operating. If you

were in their situation, what would your viewpoint be about the problem? You have certain ideas, feelings, or fears about an issue. Others may not have the same frame of reference as you do. It is helpful to discuss their perceptions as well as yours and to understand their vantage point. When everyone becomes involved in the process of reaching a solution they tend to have more ownership in the outcome and is felt by all. Try to find areas where it is possible for you to agree without sacrificing your interests in the negotiation.

Make emotions legitimate in your discussion

Do not react to emotions or outbursts as if they were a personal attack. Deal with those feelings by acknowledging them. Whenever possible differentiate emotions from the facts in trying to solve a problem.

You need to learn from the group why certain ideas are acceptable, why others are not, and how they fit into the underlying interest of all parties. Many interests stem from basic needs such as economic well-being, recognition, being well-liked, feeling secure, and being seen as a successful human being. Always make sure, if possible, that these needs are being met in any process of negotiation. A lot of times their interests can be met without any compromise of your interests. Be concise and clear about the problem and as helpful as possible in dealing with people.

Allow enough time

Avoid making difficult decisions at just one meeting. Choices are often not satisfactory when they are made before enough information has been generated. They usually end up as a single answer to a complex situation. Generate many ideas and incorporate those in meeting people's needs. There are always many ways to come up with a satisfactory solution.

Try to separate the solution from the discussion of the problem. There should always be a period of brainstorming to generate ideas before the decision is made. The broader you can make the scope of the situation, the more possibilities you generate as options. This suggests that you are trying to identify differing interests and meet as many of them as possible without giving in.

Reaching agreement

Often it is possible to generate an agreement when these kinds of interests and differences are understood by the various parties. When decision points are near, make it as easy as possible for the other party to accept. This may mean paying a lot of attention to people's feelings, such as face-saving and relationship building.

In setting out to reach an agreement, try to set up objective criteria that will be mutually acceptable to all parties. Deciding on ground rules and procedures, as well as on data sources, are often the first steps to building agreement. Think about the fairness of standards with which you will judge your agreement. Tactics such as fear and threats are not productive in maintaining relationships.⁶

Summary

The decision-making process is a lengthy one that involves a series of steps. By following these steps members will feel the item in question has been clearly analyzed and they have had a part in reaching a decision.

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Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT III: Group/ Organizational Leadership Skills

Module 4: Managing Conflicts in Groups

Differences of opinion and the resulting conflict are common to any volunteer organization or community group. When people of different backgrounds and interests come together to share decision-making, some disagreements are to be expected. Finding common ground and resolving differences will result in a stronger organization or more effective action.

The potential for conflict exist whenever and wherever people have contact. It typically involves one or more of the following:

1. Competing interests or goals.
2. Different ideas about methods of reaching goals.
3. Incomplete understanding of, or hidden, personal values and feelings.

In public decision-making, even when a goal is agreed upon, ways to implement and finance the goal may also be a source of disagreement.

Finding Common Ground

In creative management of conflict all parties need to find the common ground — that is, the goals and interests they share. This serves as a foundation for resolving differences. Rephrasing the issue as a question often makes it easier to look for solutions that are satisfactory to all parties. It is helpful for people to:

- Recognize and acknowledge that differences (conflict) exists.
- Facilitate open, accurate communication and active listening.
- Maintain an objective perspective — stay on the issues, not the personalities. However, values and emotions must be acknowledged.
- Find the common interest and goals so everybody agrees on something.
- Make the necessary adjustments, reinforce, confirm, and make the agreement work.
- Remember that conflicting ideas lead to stronger, more effective groups.

Conflict as a Difference of Opinion

Conflict can be defined as a “difference of opinion.” With that definition, it is easier to see conflict as something that is natural to community groups and relationships.¹

Conflict is often suppressed in favor of group harmony. However, suppressing conflict only drives it underground to reappear later in some more destructive form. Also, discouraging strong feelings and convictions reduces the very vitality that groups need. Conflict can stimulate new thought, lead to more creative solutions, and keep a group alert to the various interests of its members. Conflict gets internal dissension and dissatisfaction out in the open, where it can be used in making the group more responsive to its members.

As long as conflict is focused on the job to be done — rather than on personalities — the gains usually outweigh the costs.

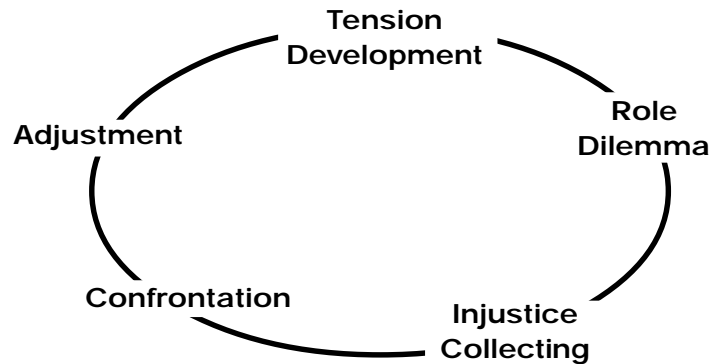
Why Does Conflict Occur?

Some conflict is inevitable in human relationships. Often clashes occur more over perceived differences than real ones. People anticipate blocks to achieving their goals that may or may not be there.^{1,2} Conflict often results from:

- A lack of communication. Failure to share ideas and feelings allows the other person to “fill in the gap.” We “read in” what we think the other person or persons will say, or anticipate how they will respond. Then, we often suspect negative things which provoke anxiety — leading us to look for the worst. If this continues, trust becomes lower and we may become suspicious and defensive.
- A value conflict in which two people have different attitudes, beliefs and expectations. These differences may interfere in making decisions if we are inflexible and hold rigid beliefs about the “right way” to do things. Two people choose different goals or different methods to achieve the same goals because they have different values and beliefs. Since each goal requires an investment of time, effort and some sacrifice, we often cannot pursue one goal without sacrificing the other to some extent.
- A lack of effective leadership or decision-making. Lack of agreement about “who’s in charge” or “how we are going to get things done” in any situation can be a source of conflict. For example, if one person in a group expects democratic decision-making (all members have input) and the other expects someone to be in charge and tell the members what to do, they may have difficulty resolving differences of opinion. Then when differences exist, members become sidetracked into a hassle over who will decide or whose opinion is going to be accepted as the “right” one, or what the decision-making processes should be. The resulting conflict becomes a “win-lose” struggle.
- Discrepancies in role expectations. Difficulties can arise if people see their own and each others’ roles differently. For example, if the officers see their role as “running the organization,” and the members see themselves as not only contributing information and opinions, but also having a real voice in decisions, conflict may arise.
- Low productivity. Being able to accomplish tasks and achieve goals is a necessary ingredient in the organizational environment. And, if the task is not done, the chairperson may get angry. If the other person responds to this anger by performing the task, a response pattern of anger is established to get results. Groups with low productivity may use nagging, making trade-offs (I’ll do this if you do that), and criticizing, but these tend to produce only short-term success.
- Change that causes disequilibrium. While change is considered to be a “given” for people working and living together, another “given” is that people tend to prefer secure, predictable patterned responses to the unknown. When changes occur abruptly and unpredictably, conflict may follow.
- Unresolved prior conflict. As the number of past unresolved conflicts increases between people, so does the possibility of future ones. Many people shy away from conflict management because memories of past conflicts still hurt. Probably the most lasting of those “scars” have been caused by conflicts with those we are closest to — family, close friends, and trusted colleagues in volunteer or work groups.

The Conflict Cycle

Conflict tends to follow a cycle, as represented in the following diagram.²



Tension Development: As the disagreement or threat begins to develop, the various parties start taking sides. The conflict can appear immediately or over time.

Role Dilemma: People or groups who are involved raise questions about what is happening, who is right, what should be done. They try to decide whether they should take sides and, if so, which one.

(Tension Development and Role Dilemma often happen at the same time.)

Injustice Collecting: Each party begins to gather support. Each itemizes the problems, justifies their position, and thinks of ways to win.

Confrontation: The parties meet and clash. If both parties hold fast to their opinions, barriers may develop. Confrontation may be lessened or avoided by one or both parties making adjustments.

Adjustments: If one party is weak and the other strong, the strong party can win by “domination,” but the conflict may reappear. If parties have equal power and neither party decides to change, they can wage a “cold war,” each party trying to weaken the other. One party may choose to “avoid” the other. The two parties may choose to “compromise,” each gaining a little and losing a little. The two parties can work together in an active participation which looks for a solution that takes care of both parties’ needs.

In most organizations and communities, only compromise or working together resolves the conflict over time. Compromise in this context means giving up some of the less important factors, not giving up one’s principles. Other adjustments are, at best, short-term solutions, and the conflict will reappear.

Methods of Dealing With Conflict

People and groups, may use several different methods of dealing with controversy. Some methods focus on preserving the relationship and resolving the issue, while others tend to have negative results.^{3,4,5}

Avoidance

Some people attempt to avoid conflict situations altogether or to avoid certain types of conflict. These people tend to repress emotional reactions, look the other way, or leave the situation entirely (for example, quit a job, leave school, get

divorced). Either they cannot face up to such situations effectively, or they do not have the skills to negotiate them effectively.

Avoidance strategies usually do not provide persons with a high level of satisfaction. They tend to leave doubts and fears about meeting the same type of situation in the future.

Diffusion

Diffusion strategies are delaying actions which try to cool off the situation, at least temporarily. Examples include: resolving minor points while delaying discussion of the major problem, postponing a confrontation until a more appropriate time, and avoiding clarification of the issues underlying the conflict. Similar to avoidance strategies, these tactics typically result in feelings of dissatisfaction, anxiety about the future, and concerns about oneself.

Confrontation

The third major strategy involves an actual confrontation of conflicting issues or persons. Confrontation can be divided into win/lose (power) strategies and win/win strategies. Power strategies include the use of physical force (a punch in the nose, war), bribery (money, favors) and punishment (withholding love, money). Such tactics are often very successful from the winners' point of view: they win, the others lose. A closer look at the power struggle suggests that it is probably not this simple. All win/lose strategies suffer from the "conflict trap." The loser has been given justification in her or his own mind for reversing the situation "next time." As a result, win/lose strategies, particularly the power strategy, are as much conflict generators as conflict resolvers. The feelings of the loser is the seed from which the next round of conflict will likely grow.

Arbitration

Arbitration is often the result of a fight strategy. When both sides in the fight are equally powerful and have equal rights, a stalemate begins, and a third party may be asked to decide the issue.

The problem with this strategy is that when the third party or judge decides between the conflicting parties, the loser seldom feels that justice has been done. The issue has been decided, but the hostility carries over and becomes a cause for renewed conflict.

Voting

Voting is a civilized form of fighting. A vote, rather than an open fight, is possible when the following conditions are present:

1. It is possible for participants in a conflict to change their position on the issue if they are convinced (election campaign).
2. There are beliefs and commitments to principles or to an organization which holds the parties together in a continuing relationship (democracy).
3. The participants will generally abide by the preference of the majority.

Compromise

Compromise strategies use negotiation and bargaining in order to “split the difference.” The premise behind compromise is that partial victory is better than winning nothing at all. Ideally, in a compromise each side gives up something of lesser value in order to achieve or retain a great goal. Compromise in this context is a form of negotiation. It does not involve giving up one’s principles or values. Compromise, at its best, turns into consensus — a win-win result.

Consensus

Consensus seeks to bring all parties in the conflict to a mutually satisfying resolution of the issue. Consensus is possible in an atmosphere where better answers and solutions are likely to emerge from differences. This is often called problem solving, based on common interests.⁵

Synergy

Synergy is the highest form of conflict resolution. Imagine a ping-pong game in which your objective is, as a player, to return the ball in a way to maximize the probability that your opponent will hit the increasingly difficult shots successfully. This reverses the win/lose strategy.

The competition is invigorating, when it is used to increase mutual winning. The better each play, the more both win...and the more both enjoy it.

Synergistic thinking encourages us to use the mind, resources and values of others to enlarge the amount of winnings.

In a win–win strategy, unlike power confrontations, both sides can win. The aim of these strategies is to resolve the conflict with a solution which is mutually satisfying to all parties involved in the conflict.

Conflict Management Process

In any group situation, there is occasionally a struggle over guidelines or rules — who sets them, the kinds of rules that exist, and what happens when rules are broken.

Guidelines and Procedures

Here are some suggested guidelines that all parties must agree to for the creative conflict management process to proceed. If they don’t, the process will quickly deteriorate as people try to “win” as much as possible and “lose” as little as possible.

- Agree that now is a good time to attempt to resolve the conflict. Allow “prime time” when energy is high and motivation is positive, not when you are angry or tired or trying to meet a deadline to adjourn.
- Share the common goal with everyone involved. The goal of creative conflict is deeper understanding, not “I win, you lose.”
- Review the ground rules for maintaining trust and respect for others. See if the group wishes to add any others. The group, as well as the facilitator, has a responsibility to see that discussion focuses on the issue and that people listen to one another. Discuss the specific issue or specific behavior, not the person, personality or motivation. However, emotions should be discussed.
- Focus on the present. Avoid engaging in fault-finding from the past.
- Agree on which sources of information will be used.

- Provide “face-saving” mechanisms. Don’t corner the other person. Allow a “time out” if emotion gets to heavy, and then set a time to resume again. Sometimes you have to agree to disagree. At other times, a trial period to see how something works out will be useful.

After everyone has agreed on guidelines about how to resolve a conflict, some suggestions for negotiating, that consider both the relationship and the issue at stake are needed.

Recognize that personal, emotional issues may be involved. The facilitator’s job is to keep both the conflict itself and the processes of conflict resolution from including personal blame and the use of offensive language. It helps to break down a big issue into smaller parts. Increasing the number of points that can be discussed separately offers more scope for negotiation and trade-offs. Bring in factual evidence wherever possible. Skilled negotiators try to re-frame issues and provide different ways to look at the conflicting positions. They focus on interests, rather than on single proposed solutions.^{5, 6, 7}

Third Party Mediation

Conflict resolution can often be assisted by a third party mediator. From time to time, each of us will have the opportunity to serve as a mediator to help others work out differences.⁵

To be helpful, the mediator must remain neutral. The role of mediator is similar to that of a traffic cop, with the main responsibility to direct traffic — not promote a given solution or solve the problem for the other parties. The mediator suggests different approaches to resolving conflict, insures an open and balanced conversation flow, enforces ground rules, and protects the involved individuals from personal attack.

Conflict Resolution

The distinction between conflict management and conflict resolution is important. We can manage conflict by withdrawing, by attacking or overpowering the other person, or by working out a compromise, but these strategies will not resolve the conflict. Each of these strategies carries a certain cost to the relationship. Also, since the conflict is only managed, not resolved, the conflict is likely to resurface.

For a conflict to be resolved, two conditions must be met:

1. A cooperative rapport must be established between the conflicting parties, with a genuine concern for each other’s needs.
2. A solution must be found that is acceptable to both sides.

RESULTS of CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Successful

- Better ideas are produced.
- People are forced to search for new approaches.
- Long-standing problems surface and are addressed.
- People are forced to clarify their views.
- Tension stimulates interest and creativity.
- People have a chance to test their capabilities.

Unsuccessful

- People feel defeated and humiliated.
- The distance between the parties increases.
- A climate of distrust develops.
- Cooperation may decrease.
- Resistance develops when team work is needed.
- Some people leave because of

Not all conflicts can be successfully resolved at a particular time. A willingness to develop a cooperative spirit and to engage in joint problem-solving, along with some specific strategies are often successful. This is often called interest based negotiation.

Improving Conflict Management Skills

Much conflict in groups stems from “communication gaps.” For the effective management and perhaps ultimate resolution of conflict, there are two skills which are necessary — active listening, and the clear sharing of concerns through “I-Messages.”

Listen. The area in which we most often fall short in our efforts to manage conflict is in listening. We really fail to listen to other people — their needs, wants, concerns, fears and feelings behind them. Rather than listen, we come on strong. We question, confront, defend, and use power and influence to overwhelm the other person. We feel we have heard and understood the other person’s view. We instead focus on getting our point across. We try to convince the other person of how right we are. We bring rational, logical ideas to bear, but with limited results.

In order to manage conflict effectively, we first have to listen.^{4,6} We must:

- Stop talking.
- Give the person our total attention. You are not listening if you are thinking about what you are going to say next.
- Be attentive. Get in a straight line with the person. Assume an open posture and make regular eye contact. Physically react — nod, smile, shake your head in agreement, take notes. Clearly show through your actions that you are listening.
- Open the door. Invite the person to share his or her thoughts, feelings, or frustrations about the issue at hand. Use phrases such as “Tell me about it,” “Go on,” “Good point.”

- Reflect. Summarize back to the person what has been said. “You feel...”; “You are concerned with ...”;
- Reflect the feelings as well as the words spoken. “You were quite annoyed over . . .” Reflective listening clearly shows that you are listening, develops rapport, and ends miscommunication.
- Probe. Ask for more information, “Please explain what you mean by . . .” Don’t interrogate — seek to clarify the person’s needs, interests, and concerns.
- Show genuine interest. Not until people feel listened to, understood, and respected in their views will they be open to your views.
- Use “I-Messages”. Active listening is key to your effectiveness in conflict management. Conflict is not, however, resolved through listening alone. You must also clearly convey your opinion, needs, concerns, and feelings — hopefully, to the other person’s understanding and respect. Only then can collaborative problem-solving begin.

The “I-message” provides an effective means for expressing your thoughts in an assertive but non-threatening manner. It simply involves expressing your concern, needs, opinion, or feelings through an honest, straightforward statement that begins with the word “I.” “I’m concerned about . . .” “I would prefer if we . . .” “I was embarrassed by . . .” “I suggest . . .”

Care should be taken to express yourself in a direct but non-threatening, non-judgmental manner.

Much conflict is resolved through a simple process of shifting back and forth between active listening and “I-messages”. This allows us to clarify and understand each other’s needs and concerns and the feelings behind them. As you begin to better understand each other’s points of view, you move on to collaborative problem solving — to the resolution of the conflict. The key is willingness to be involved in the process of listening and sharing clear “I-messages”.^{4,7}

TECHNIQUES to REMEMBER⁷

1. Initiate an open and honest discussion about the conflict.
2. Be assertive, but not aggressive. Do not be afraid to state your own position, but do it in a non-threatening way without attacking the other person.
3. Communicate the idea that even though you disagree with their views, you still love them as a person. (This is similar to the idea of telling a child that even though you may not like some bad behavior, you still love the child.)
4. Again, affirm your positive feelings for the other person. This will often open the door to more acceptance on their part. Your positive affirmation of them removes some of the threat from the disagreement and makes them more open to change.
5. Don't be reluctant to consider compromise. Meet them halfway.
6. Suggest that the other person consider a compromise. Find a common ground of agreement. Use it to help resolve the conflict.
7. Consider the use of humor to help defuse the tension in arguments.
8. Every argument seems to have at least two "innocent victims" who are each suffering a "wrong" from the other. Examine your own behavior. Are you being unreasonable or inflexible?
9. Remember, constructive conflict resolution begins with your actions, feelings, skills and willingness to change.
10. Outline a plan of action to resolve a particular conflict. What are you going to do to try and resolve the conflict? How do you expect the other person to respond? What will you do if they don't behave in the expected way?
11. Keep conflict resolution efforts constructive. Gently challenge their views, but never threaten their person.
12. Initially, you can begin your conflict resolution efforts by building a mutual climate of trust. Work together with the other person on a joint cooperative effort. Cooperative interaction builds trust and has a powerful positive effect on the relationship between two people.
13. Refrain from "labeling" the other persons' position. If you label their ideas as "wrong," "simplistic," or "ridiculous," it will elicit an equally negative reaction from the other person and may cause them to get defensive.
14. Avoid "no-win" situations where, even if you win, the relationship costs are too high of a price to pay. Is the issue of the conflict really worth the grief it may be causing?

Summary

Conflict can be managed by withdrawing, by attacking, by overpowering the others involved, or by reaching a compromise. But these do not resolve the conflict and it is likely to resurface. To truly resolve the conflict a cooperative rapport must be established between the conflicting groups, with a concern for each other, and solution must be found that is acceptable to both sides.

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A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
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for Rural Development

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Extension Associate
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Assistant Professor
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Michele Crago
County Extension Agent
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

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Atchison County

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**UNIT IV:
Community/
Public Policy
Leadership
Skills**

Module 1: Dealing With Change

Change has always been part of the human condition. What is different now, however, is the pace of change, and the prospect that it will come faster and faster, affecting every part of life. The age in which we live is changing so fast that we often feel we do not have time to adjust before more change takes place.

Change can be defined as any planned or unplanned alteration in the status quo of an organism, situation or process. Change may happen through transmission — without deliberate or conscious social actions or decisions — or through transformation, which occurs as a result of planned or conscious social decisions or action.

Planned change is an intended, designed, or purposeful attempt by an individual, group, organization or larger social system to directly influence the status quo of itself, another organism or a situation.

Leadership and Change

One of the key parts of the leadership process is dealing with change. Individuals face change in many different ways. This may vary with the nature of the change and whether it is voluntary (i.e., chosen), or involuntary, happening without control or choice. Sometime it is possible to predict a change, while others occur in an unpredictable fashion.

Communities and organizations also experience transitions and changes. The culture of an organization or community is a composite of the individuals who live, work or belong. Organizational change is any planned or unplanned alteration of the status quo which affects the structure, technology and human resources of the total organization.

Stages of Change

Three stages of change can usually be identified: endings, the neutral zone, and new beginning.^{1,2} Change can often be examined by starting with an ending.

• Endings

The ending is actually the beginning of the transition. An end marks the death of the old — old habits are given up. Loss of a spouse, close friends moving, children leaving home, a committee finishing its projects, or a change in jobs are just a few examples of what could be described as endings.

In each of the above examples, something is given up. In other examples, even when the change will involve a new opportunity such as getting a grant, being elected to an office or getting a new job, there is an ending to an existing pattern of behavior.

• Neutral Zone

The bridge between the ending and a new beginning is characterized as the neutral zone. Typically, there is a struggle with the situation, and there is mourning. It should be a time when you talk with others about what has happened and process your experience and feelings.

Information is gathered about the situation. Options and their probable consequences are identified. Experimenting with the new beginning starts, and new plans are made.

• **Beginning**

New goals result from the planning process. New relationships are established. New or different ways of using time, money, or other resources are developed.

Gradually, different patterns of goals and behavior develop, possibly with different sources of satisfaction.

Reactions to Change

Accepting the neutral zone is critical. Individuals can reduce the feeling of being trapped by finding productive things to do. It's important to maintain health and allow time for reflection and discussion. Remember that transition tends to bring on a crisis of identity for everyone, as an individual or as a member of a group. A community going through change may experience a similar crisis. You can influence transitions and/or changes in your life, in your community, and in your group.

Many attitudes about change and diversity are formed in childhood. Diversity in the sense of recognizing and valuing the differences among people and cultures has many dimensions: some are visible — others are not. Many changes involve becoming more inclusive in our relationships. As people become more aware of these multiple dimensions, they can better appreciate and value others. Analysis of the reasons for one's beliefs can begin with thinking about roles and role models in a variety of situations. Personality types also differ in their attitudes and acceptance of change.³

Most people find it helpful to have strategies for dealing with change. A plan can help in coping with unpredictable changes as well as the predictable ones. During times of change and transition, values may be examined and either affirmed or revised.

Organizational Change

The principles in dealing with personal change and organizational change are very similar. Organizations are composed of individuals. When change occurs within an organization, individuals are affected. They can resist or accept the change that is proposed.⁴ Some typical reactions include:

Resistance to Change

- Tradition is threatened: "We have always done it this way" is a common comment.
- It is perceived as illogical: Costs seem greater than benefits.
- It is perceived as self-serving: Who is promoting it? Is there a personal benefit?
- It lacks clear intention and direction: Change evolves slowly. Rarely are all parts in place at the very beginning.
- It brings on fear of the unknown: This fear can produce a reluctance to trade the known (the way things are now) for an uncertain, new way.
- Positions are threatened: Will the change bring reorganization? Will power positions change?

Acceptance of Change

- The need for change is recognized.
- It is logical: Its merits are understood.
- People are involved in the change: Because they are part of it, they support it.
- It is non–threatening: For example, jobs will not be lost and there will be no pay cut. If this is not possible, there will at least be recognition of the problem and some strategies to help those affected.
- Its intention is very clear.
- It is perceived to have a low risk level.

Strategies for Dealing with Changes

Groups can make changes in many ways. Two very different styles for initiating change are summarized here. A variety of activities for each shows the difference between these styles.^{4,5}

Collaborative Strategies

A collaborative strategy is one in which you work with the group to identify needs and generate new ideas to solve a problem. Collaborative strategy may involve the following activities:

- Providing information about the problem.
- Presenting alternative courses of action (such as programs and procedures).
- Requesting support for new approaches to the problem (such as new forms of service delivery).
- Appointing a task force to study and recommend alternative approaches to the problem.
- Creating new opportunities to express ideas and feelings, build trust, and learn better ways to communicate with each other.
- Appealing to conscience, ethics and values, with a focus on the common good.
- Persuading by logical argument and presentation of data.
- Pointing out the negative consequences of continuing a specific policy.

Adversary Strategies

To bring about change using adversary strategies, you must work against the group — trying to influence people to adopt proposed changes. Adversary strategy may involve the following activities:

- Submitting petitions which set forth demands.
- Confronting the group openly in agency meetings and public forums.
- Bringing sanctions against the agency through external funding, standard–setting and professional agencies.
- Publicly criticizing and exposing organizational practices through the communications media.
- Calling strikes or picketing.
- Engaging in litigation.
- Bargaining to negotiate differences and to develop compromise solutions.

Adversary strategies commonly result in win/lose situations that hamper positive relationships in organizations or communities.

Conditions for Change

Three conditions must exist for effective, planned change to take place within an organization or community:

1. Surplus resources must exist or be created.
These resources may come in a variety of forms and can be developed in a variety of ways. They might include dollars, skills, time, information, etc. They can be in place as surplus resources, or be created through such actions as a budget cut or reallocating, or attainment of a grant or other donations.
2. The implications of change must be clear.
A lack of clarity will bring resistance.
3. Time must be available.
Time is critical in decision-making patterns. When many people must be involved in reaching an agreement, a long-term plan will be needed.

Leadership and Organizational Change

Understanding how organizational change takes place is not easy. Knowing how decisions are made, and who is making them, is critical in working toward implementing change within an organization. The first step in understanding organizational change is to identify or classify the types of organizations according to their decision-making patterns.⁴

Three types of organizations can be distinguished: directive, mixed and developmental organizations.

1. Directive: Decision-making takes a minimum of time because participation in decision-making is limited.

Change comes through:

- Use of authority or coercion.
- Directives “from the top.”
- Establishment of emergency rules to deal with crises.

2. Mixed: Decisions require a moderate amount of time. More people are involved, so decision-making takes more time than in directive groups.

Change comes through:

- Bargaining more than coercion.
- Some exploitation.
- Compromise over difficult issues.

3. Developmental: Decision-making is usually the slowest in this type of organization. More people are involved, and there are more decision-making levels.

Change comes through:

- Cooperation (team-oriented).
- More creative alternatives or solutions.
- Pressure for action from the bottom up.
- Reciprocal adjustments.

Becoming a Change Agent

Three categories of people are often involved in making changes in an organization: change initiators, change implementers and change adopters.^{4,5}

Change Agent Categories:

1. **CHANGE INITIATORS** – see that something needs to be done. Convert issues into a need for change.

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Examples</u>
FIRST LINERS: The first to confront resistance to it.	<i>Present a topic on child abuse at a club meeting.</i>
PATRONS: Give money and endorsements.	<i>Organizational sponsorship of a candidate.</i>
DEMONSTRATORS: Promote public discussion.	<i>Working mothers petition school board for after-school daycare facilities.</i>

2. **CHANGE IMPLEMENTERS** – work to make the change an accepted practice.

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Examples</u>
EXTERNAL EXPERTS: Have special knowledge.	<i>Include public policy topic into every meeting.</i>
EXTERNAL/INTERNAL EXPERTS: Know the internal system. Come as external consultants.	<i>Hold series of meetings on topics featuring inside and outside speakers.</i>
INTERNAL EXPERTS: Work with members to implement the change over a long period.	<i>Select committee project to work on during the year.</i>

3. **CHANGE ADOPTERS** – practice new behavior.

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Examples</u>
EXPERIMENTERS: Will try it. Normalize the change.	<i>Try and use a new method of evaluation.</i>
MAINTAINERS: Don't want to fight it.	<i>Implement new program approaches.</i>
USERS: Accept changed product or service.	<i>Select a chairperson to institutionalize change.</i>

Summary

Change has always been a part of the human condition. What is different now is the pace of change and the prospect that it will come faster and faster, affecting every part of life. No one can escape change. Today's society is changing so fast that people feel they do not have time to adjust before more change takes place. Traditions and customary ways of doing things no longer work. Communities where everyone knew everyone else are giving way to new neighborhoods where there seem to be many strangers. A strong community requires a broad base of leadership, that provides the ability to combine the expertise of many different people and with a spirit of caring and connectedness.

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Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
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FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
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Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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Unit IV—Module 1—7



**UNIT IV:
Community/
Public
Policy
Leadership
Skills**

Module 2: Strategic Planning and Mobilizing Resources

Meaning of a purpose cannot be wholly conveyed by the words of charters and mission statements. Organizations and committees use the vision of a desired future to represent and communicate their purpose. The vision embodies people's highest values and aspirations (for self-actualization, excellence, service, and community). It inspires people to reach for what could be and to rise above their fears and preoccupations with current reality.

The process of creating visions enables people to clarify and realize that they really want, independent of what presently seems possible. It encourages them to develop visions of the future and then builds a bridge between the current and desired states. Building the bridge may require problem solving, but the solutions are likely to be less limiting, more effective, and more satisfying.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning provides a systematic approach to planning for future development and allocating needed resources for anticipated changes. Strategic planning considers possible future events and trends, and then bases planning and resource allocation on anticipated changes. Implementation strategies link the plan with resources and action.

The crux of strategic planning is "anticipated" change. The organization plans for the future by envisioning what the future will be like.^{1,2} The questions to be asked are "How will the future be different?" and, "What decisions can we make now, based on this perception of the future?" How can the group move toward their desired vision for the future?

Why Use Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is a useful process for small groups, for organizations and for communities. Such planning considers possible future events and trends. Planning and resource allocation are then based on anticipated changes. The central focus of strategic planning is dealing with change. Implementation, visioning and goal setting are important components.

Both the product (the actual plan) and the process of development have important benefits. Effective strategic planning encourages consensus-building. The process enables people to work together more effectively for a common purpose.

A good plan attracts people and resources. It identifies short-range and long-range goals that can be monitored for success. Communication among stakeholders is also made easier. Strategic planning helps people look at the big picture, rather than just parts or one issue in isolation, and considers how the parts fit or relate to the whole. The focus is on critical issues and actions, rather than overwhelming details.

Learning and experiencing a process which focuses on a holistic, rather than a fragmented approach, helps build synergy and make good use of resources. People are motivated when they determine where they want to go and develop the methods to get there.

What Type of Structure and Process is Needed?

Strategic planning deals not only with the long-term, but also the short-term and the intermediate planning period. Thus, those involved should be working toward goals that address important issues for the next one to six months as well as issues that will take longer to resolve.^{2,3}

The process is inclusive rather than exclusive, and all interested citizens should be encouraged to participate. However, it is important to identify people who have a large stake in the community and personally invite these individuals or their representatives to participate in the process. If these stakeholders are excluded, whether intentionally or not, the strategic planning process will be weakened.

It is extremely helpful to have an outside facilitator (someone not directly involved with the community or organization) who understands the planning process. This helps the group keep their focus, lets everyone express their opinions fully, and avoids bias.

Strategic planning has benefits whether an organization or collaborative group is newly formed, has been around for several years, has no plan in place, or is in need of reviewing and refining an existing plan. A variety of different models are available. Two examples are described here.

The VMOSA Model

The “VMOSA” model or framework for the strategic planning process is one effective model.⁴ It consists of a:

Vision **M**ission **O**bjectives **S**trategies **A**ction Plans **A**ction Steps

Several definitions and criteria are used in this model.

The Vision: is the dream — the idea of the way things ought to be. The vision should be shared by all, stated concisely, and be easy to communicate. It serves as the guide for setting directions.

The Mission: tells what and why. It also needs to be clear, concise, and easy to communicate. The mission will be more detailed than the vision. It often refers to the general purpose of the organization, or the beliefs and culture of a community.

The Objectives: describe measurable results. They indicate how much will be accomplished, how well it will be done, and in what time period. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. (In some models, objectives are referred to as goals, or more specifically, “SMART Goals.” When goals and objectives are distinguished, goals are a general statement of intent, while objectives are more specific.)

The Strategies: tell how the objectives will be met. They also should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed.

The Action Plans: indicate what steps will be taken, by whom and when. They add another step to the strategies by initiating a plan for action.

Action Steps: answer questions such as,

- What?
- How much?
- By whom?
- When?
- Costs?

These steps, taken together, provide clear guidelines for directing organizational or community change. The steps should be clearly written down and in sufficient detail so they provide an effective guide and monitoring function.

Strategic plans should engage multiple sectors in the community, include all the stakeholders, and identify community changes.

Building consensus requires dialogue to ensure that the proposed changes are regarded as important, feasible and sufficient. Compromise among different interest groups is usually needed. Both the actual change and the method of achieving the change must be included in the discussion.

Vision to Action Model

Another model is the Vision to Action process, which helps a community or an organization to:

- Identify its vision for itself
- Specify its mission and purpose
- Find its niche
- Focus on strategies and action projects to reach that vision in light of the community which it serves

This relatively recent approach to community building through modified strategic planning incorporates identifying assets, building capacity, bringing diverse players together, building on community strengths, and finding common ground.⁵

The Vision to Action Planning Process is based upon the following questions as a framework:

- Where have we been?
- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to go?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know when we get there?

Definitions and criteria in this model include:

The Vision: addresses the question of WHAT. What are the ideal characteristics? It is a description of what things would be like if they were what we wanted. A vision is not concerned with how to get to where you want to go, just where you want to go.

Strategic Priorities: are the conditions which must exist in order to create successful action projects.

- The Action: that which needs to be done to move the community closer to a vision element.
- The Action Projects: work ready to be done, an action planned in detail. This includes specifically what needs to be done, who can do it, when it will be done, and how it can be accomplished now that it is a project ready for work.

Other Models

Other frequently used models include determination of a shared vision, and identification of weaknesses, barriers or limitations. Characteristics may also include identification of strengths or assets, and development of top priority goals and action steps.

Many approaches today endeavor to place more emphasis on asset preservation and development, and less focus on needs or problems. Sometimes this seems to be just a matter of wording, but a more important result is the ability to maintain and promote a positive approach.

Some Tips on the Planning Process

- Be inclusive.
- Manage conflict.
- Use brainstorming rules.
- Be efficient.
- Communicate products of planning.
- Provide support and encouragement.

Aligning and Mobilizing Resources

One or two individuals, or a small group, usually take charge of mobilizing resources and setting a strategic plan in motion. The larger planning group will have prepared the overall blueprint. They should have worked to separate needs from wants, since people who are emotionally involved in an issue may confuse their own “wants” with community “needs.” It’s essential to sort out which issues are the important ones. Priorities are set as groups determine which is most important, which is second in importance, third in importance, etc. Then, the correct sequence and strategies for attacking the top priorities are developed in detail. This may involve further refinement in the overall plan as human and other resources are developed and aligned with the goals.

In most cases, the nominal group process is the best technique for setting priorities. Others which may be considered include an attitude survey, group discussion and consensus building. Again, involve as many people as possible.

Review Goals and Objectives

If you are in charge of “mobilization” or fund-raising, determine what needs to be done about each priority and state it as a goal. Then, break the goal down into more specific objectives.

Remember that a goal is a general statement of intent. An objective tells who will do what by when. Well-written objectives are challenging, realistic, specific, measurable, simple and not too confining. These terms are often used interchangeably, so it’s important to specify the level of action expected.

Assess Resources

What human, financial and physical resources are available to carry out the objectives? If the resources are inadequate, for any reason, then the objectives may need to be rewritten to make them more realistic.

Techniques which may help assess resources include a local resource inventory, public meetings, or discussions with individuals who are aware of the area, state and federal resources. Most potential donors or contributors prefer to contribute to a specific project, so framing your requests in this way will be helpful. Communities can take advantage of both local and outside resources.

Alignment/Agreement

Alignment is the special condition wherein people operate freely and fully as part of a larger whole. It is created when people see their group's purpose as an extension of their personal purposes. People who are aligned identify with the organization and consciously assume responsibility for its success. They naturally support each other out of a recognition that "We are a part of the same whole."

Alignment is more than people agreeing on where they are going. A strategic planning session may produce agreement on joint goals and individual objectives, while generating a lot of immediate enthusiasm and commitment. Several months later, however, even though individuals are keeping their agreements, collective goals are not accomplished, people are dissatisfied, and there may be a pervasive feeling that the plan is not working. In most organizations and communities, people have fundamental agreement on general goals, but these groups lack alignment. Alignment deals with the more inspirational aspect of purpose or vision, while agreement often deals with the mechanics of goals and objectives. People who agree may be saying no more than, "We share the same good ideas."

People in aligned groups are more likely to keep their agreements with each other because of their deeply felt personal commitment to a common purpose. They also are more capable of both disagreeing about ideas and resolving these disagreements because their commitment enables them to transcend their differences. Financial and other non-human resources also must be carefully aligned to fit the group vision and goals.

Aligned groups value personal power, because when people are fundamentally committed to the same direction, the increase in their individual power increases the total power of the organization.

Consider a group of people within an unaligned organization (A). While people are generally moving in the same direction, which we could view as the purpose of the organization, they are somewhat unaligned, or pulling in different directions. By contrast, people in an aligned organization (B) pull in the same direction.



Revise the Plan

The objectives as well as activities for meeting the objectives should be included in the plan. The plan should specify individuals' responsibilities and a time by which each activity will be completed. The plan coordinates all of the resources so the overall goal is accomplished logically and efficiently.

In delegating responsibilities, keep in mind that some people are willing to help plan, some will legitimize, some will provide resources, and some will be workers. If planners are called on to be workers, they may rebel and fail to deliver. Using people in the wrong roles is a common mistake. Be sure people are committed to do specifically what the plan requires of them.

Implement the Plan

Constantly refer to the written plan to guide the work.

Techniques needed at this point include effective communication, conflict resolution, group dynamics, and publicity. If the plan has been carefully written, individuals who have the necessary skills will have the responsibility to use those skills at the right time.

In some communities, people lack some of the critical skills or at least the confidence to use them. In that case, the community should organize training to develop necessary skills before plunging ahead.

Evaluate Results

Encourage feedback from everyone who is involved. As people implement the plan, they will invariably run into snags. Everything cannot be anticipated in the plan. At this point, it may be desirable to adjust the plan to make it more realistic before proceeding. Maintain an attitude of flexibility which will enable minor adjustments or, if necessary, a major adjustment where the entire plan must be rewritten due to a major snag.

When you think the project is completed, check the objectives to be certain nothing has been overlooked. You may want an outsider to conduct a formal evaluation in some cases. You will at least want to record what you did, right or wrong, to improve chances of success on future projects.³

An Ongoing Process

The process described above is sequential. However, once you get into aligning resources with objectives, you may want to change your thinking. When you backtrack to make changes, follow the effects of those changes through each succeeding step.

Summary

The difference between a group accomplishing many projects and a group who seem to get little accomplished is in having a vision which is supported by everyone involved. This vision is not enough, though, as the group must know how to organize and what steps follow. People must also be aligned and resources lined up, before the plan can be put into action.

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4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

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FACS, Lyon County

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County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT IV: Community/ Public Policy Leadership Skills

Module 3: Public Issues

Do you have an idea that could benefit your community? Is there a concern in the back of your mind that keeps nagging at you? Is there a law that needs updating, or a community problem that someone should do something about? Could that someone be you?

Public concern about a policy issue develops over a period of time. Frequently, people become disturbed by a particular situation — which results in discussion, tension and conflict that leads to a search for solutions. There are often many issues surrounding a problem or concern.

The terms “public issue” and “public policy” can be defined in several ways. A private problem or issue becomes public when consequences of individual or group action go beyond those directly involved. And, there is an effort by others to influence those consequences. As more people become involved, leaders and interested citizens become aware of the concern. Discussion clarifies and defines the problem or opportunity — the gap between “what is” and “what could be.” The issue emerges as different ideas about what could be done are developed.^{1,2}

Public issues are controversial because different groups of people are affected in different ways. Even when a goal is agreed upon, different ways of reaching the goal and/or financing the new outcome, may be favored by different individuals or groups. An advantage or benefit for some may be a disadvantage or cost for others. For example, the problem may be a community’s high rate of illiteracy in adults. The policy options might include reading programs, parent education, or school policies to reduce dropouts. Doing nothing (maintaining the status quo) is also an option.

Public policy consists of statements or principles underlying government action. Policy is expressed in local, state and federal government action as legislation, resolutions, programs, regulations, appropriations, administrative practices and court decisions. Less formal policy also includes customs and traditional ways of doing things.

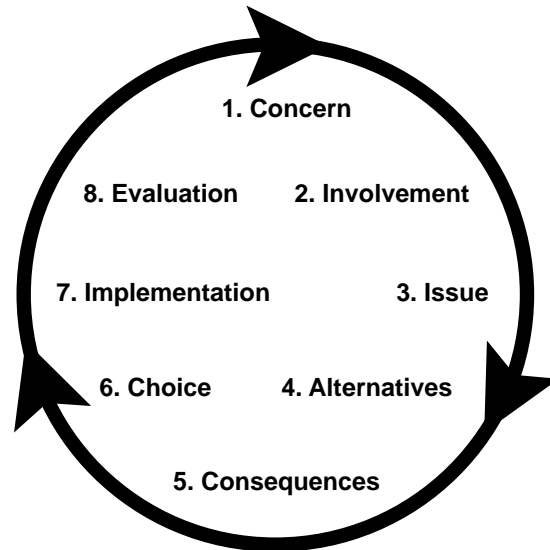
The Issue Evolution Cycle

Public issues and policies can be examined from many perspectives. They have consequences that affect society, either directly or indirectly. The effects may include social, economic and environmental impacts. They are felt by all individuals, families, industry, agriculture, management, labor, consumers, producers and tax payers.

Issues usually evolve gradually over time, although sometimes a crisis may precipitate a need for rapid action.^{1,3} The issue resolution cycle generally includes these stages:

1. Growing concern and interest.
2. Involvement of officials and/or citizens.
3. Specification or framing of the fundamental issue (not just a list of symptoms).

4. Identification of alternative (including maintenance of the status quo) solutions.
5. Determination of consequences of each alternatives.
6. Selection of one alternatives (or combination of several).
7. Implementation of the choice.
8. Evaluation.



Issue Evolution Cycle

Issue Analysis

Public issues can be studied in many ways. You must learn the facts. There is no substitute for information. You must also learn about other people's points of view. You must distinguish between facts, myths and values. Remember that people with different values and goals can reach different conclusions from the same facts. Frequently, not all facts can be discovered. This is particularly true when the impacts of a choice will not be known for many years. The following suggestions will help guide your study.^{4,5}

1. DEFINE the problem.

Identifying the problem is the foundation of issue analysis. Try to state the basic problem in neutral terms, or as a question, rather than in terms of a symptom or proposal for change.

Then, determine the issues which relate to the problem. They may originate from many sources, such as citizen groups, educators, consumer activists, governmental bodies, business groups, or combinations of these groups.

2. EXPLORE the possible alternative solutions and their consequences.

Controversial issues are accompanied by strong opinions. It is important to gather as many facts as possible in order to make a thorough evaluation. Make a complete list of alternatives and consequences so that the data you gather will provide the balance you need for objectivity. Avoid classifying the consequences as advantages and disadvantages, since an advantage for some persons may be a disadvantage for others.

Some possible consequences or impacts are listed below. Depending on the particular situation, some will be more important than others to different groups of people. Ask yourself about the effects or consequences of a policy choice on:

- Family
- Health or safety
- Freedom of choice
- Quality of life
- Environment

Be sure to consider the long-range implications of the consequences to avoid costly mistakes and reduce the need for a future reversal. Also remember that these are many individual variations within categories (such as families and employees).

3. STATE your position.

Think through all the choices very carefully. Your decision will be based on both facts and your values. Then, go on to examine the issue in terms of the policy-making process. When you have reached your conclusion, write it in your own words with your own reasons for reaching your decisions. Writing helps you clarify your thoughts and makes it easier to discuss your opinion with others. Dialogue with others who have different viewpoints is helpful at this stage.

As an educator, you provide information in as neutral and objective a way as possible. As a citizen leader, you may advocate for a particular choice of action or for support of your organization or group. Whether your goal is to get a law passed or to establish a community project or program, your position will be strengthened if you can provide information about the human, financial, and physical resources available, as well as possibilities for obtaining or developing other resources which may be needed.^{1, 2, 5}

4. DETERMINE the current status of the issue.

It is usually best to become involved in an issue as early as possible. The further it progresses from discussion to action, the more difficult it is to make a substantial contribution.

Find out if the issue is in the discussion stage, or what action may have been taken. Has a resolution been passed or a regulation proposed? Has legislation been introduced?

5. FIND OUT WHO will be affected by the issue.

Is the issue local, or does it affect a large segment of society? Who has the most to gain or lose with respect to the issue? How does it affect you as a consumer, taxpayer, citizen? Are there citizen or consumer activist groups, professional associations, or other organizations working on this problem?

6. DETERMINE WHERE the issue will be decided.

Will it be decided at a local, state or national level? Who has the authority and jurisdiction to make the decision? Will it be decided by a legislative body, commissioners or a regulatory agency?

7. **FIND OUT WHEN** the decision will be made.

Is this an issue that will be decided in the near future or over a period of time? This will determine your schedule of action. All too often, people do not register their opinions until a decision has already been made.

8. **RECHECK** the status of the issue.

Before taking action, recheck the status of the issue. During your study process, the issue might have advanced further along the route to a decision. It is important to know the current status so your opinion is directed to the proper source.

Moving Toward Action

Citizen participation means that individuals exercise their freedom of choice to decide when, where, and how they might become involved in community decision-making. This choice is fundamental to a democratic society. Individuals participate when they have reasons that are important to them. People get involved in different issues, activities and groups to the extent that their personal needs and interests are appealed to and met.

Most citizens are willing to become more involved in the decision-making process, but they may hesitate because they don't know how to get started.⁶ Factors which promote participation include:

- Learning how the government or policy-making process works.
- Developing leadership and communication skills.
- Analyzing issues and identifying possible solutions.
- Building networks and coalitions.
- Mobilizing human, financial and community resources to accomplish goals.

A citizen who wants to be more effective in analyzing issues and influencing policy decisions has many choices. The first thing to do is to get information and decide how to participate. Everyone who votes or attends a fund-raising event for a favorite candidate, cause or political group is starting an impact on public policy. Attending meetings and discussion groups is a good first step, particularly for the person who is somewhat hesitant.

You can join and support an organization that is working to establish or support the activities you favor, lobby on your own, or work for candidates who share your views. Lobbying means influencing other people's ideas — it need not be a formal action only at the capital. Self-confidence is gained through study, practice and experience.

What's Your Style?

Some people enjoy being "center stage," others prefer "building the sets." Both make important contributions. Citizens with experience in basic organizational skills offer valuable services to any study group or political action group. Those who are willing to share information (names, contacts, phone numbers, community backgrounds), who can make and follow through on a time and task commitment, and who are able to meet changing deadlines and to pitch in where needed, are essential to most volunteer citizen groups.

Think about the type of activities you like to do. For example, if you like to read and do research, you can provide a service by pulling together data to develop an issue and possible solutions. If talking on the telephone is your favorite occupation, you might volunteer to call people to set up meetings, interview others about their ideas and opinions, or get out the vote.

Once you have identified an issue that interests you, moving from ideas to action involves getting your suggestions into the decision-making process. What steps can you take? What can you do to make your efforts effective? Find out who else is working on, or is interested in that issue. This often leads you to a group who might support your work. You may find others with similar interests in an existing organization or in an important group that works together on the issue.

Some groups are interested in solving problems, while others only want to discuss the issue or just complain. As you look for support, encouragement and resources to bring about change, remember that diversity and dialogue usually lead to a stronger plan or project that is more widely accepted. If differences of opinion occur, as they will, make sure the process of conflict resolution and reaching consensus is carried out.

Join a Group

Ask the mayor's office, county clerk's office or state agencies for lists of citizen advisory boards, terms of office for current members, and when and how new appointments are made. You can form a group (such as a task force, committee, or study group) by initiating a meeting of people interested in a particular issue. If your group has an issue that no existing mechanism is set up to handle, ask that a city or county committee be appointed to study and make recommendations, and ask that you or some of your group's volunteers be appointed.

Before joining an existing group, consider it carefully to make sure your interests are similar and productive.

Educators and Advocates

In almost every community, there are some who look beyond current issues and put their emphasis on promoting understanding through high-quality public discourse. They are also concerned about nurturing a community-wide capacity to address issues. Such people may hold elected or appointed public positions, or belong to an organization. They are committed to building the know-how to solve problems and seize opportunities.

There are also community leaders who have strong positions on their community's issues. Their public role involves promoting their own point of view, their own way of framing the problem, and their own set of solutions. Their priority is advocacy, but they also see the need to function in a context of learning and dialogue.

The Educator Role

As a public issues educator, your job is to plan and help carry out learning activities related to public issues. You may be an individual who is concerned with improving the way issues are addressed or associated with an organization or community task force. The functions of a public issues educator require several different types of expertise. Frequently a team of people share these leadership roles.

The role or function of a public issues educator may include:

CONVENER: who calls a group together for mutual learning, skill building or collaborative problem-solving.

PROGRAM PLANNER: who attends to the design of learning activities and the way they mesh with planning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

FACILITATOR: who leads a group through a process of learning, information sharing and problem-solving.

INFORMATION PROVIDER: who identifies relevant information and delivers via lecture, print or electronic means.

ADVISER/ANALYST: who gathers and interprets relevant information, and participates actively in identifying alternatives and anticipating consequences.

FORECASTER: who analyzes emerging issues to help a group begin to address issues as early as possible.

The Advocate's Role

Individuals and groups are motivated to participate in public policy decision-making in response to some interest with which they identify. People use a variety of techniques to clarify their opinions, consider the viewpoints of others, and convey these ideas to the relevant policy.²

Advocacy means promoting a specific solution to a problem, a policy choice, or a candidate. Advocacy is sometimes called lobbying. Anyone who can make a phone call or write a letter can lobby. Lobbying is an important part of citizen leadership.

Why? First, because virtually every aspect of our lives, every institution, every activity is affected by government at some level. Government responds to the wishes of the people. At times this may not be apparent and at times it seems to take forever, but sooner or later the actions of our government reflect the wishes of the people. There is one big IF. Government reflects what the people want ONLY if you and enough others take the trouble to let policy makers know what you want.

The second reason why you should lobby is that if you don't someone else will. Every cause has its advocates. Lobbying is often essential to explaining and building support for your cause. Any program or organization that does not lobby well, may be left out.

Models of Public Issues Education

Many models are available to serve as guides for educational programs. They combine facts or subject matter regarding the issues with process skills such as discussion and analysis.

Four frequently used models are include the:

1. Alternatives and Consequences Model:

This model stresses the middle stages of the issue resolution process: clarifying options and anticipating the impacts of each. This model assumes that an issue has been defined and focuses on the central elements of a thoughtful choice. This focus on the key concepts of identifying alternatives and solutions, then analyzing the consequences — the “what-ifs” of each alternative — is so important that the same steps can be found in nearly all other models as well.

An important feature of the alternatives and consequences model is that it

avoids favoritism toward any one alternative. It is possible to use this model to facilitate discussion in which participants themselves identify and analyze the alternatives and consequences. However, the model has more often been used as an aid for organizing experts' presentations about public issues. Experts in such a role need to spend a great deal of time with colleagues and other knowledgeable people to pinpoint the analytical heart of an issue. Then, they need to incorporate that insight into their educational approach in ways that avoid divisiveness. Some people believe that the educator must know more about the issue than anyone else to lead a discussion. Others believe that a good facilitator can call in experts and ask them questions to bring out the points needed for group discussion and educated decision-making.

2. Issue Evolution/Educational Intervention Model:

This model consists of stages or steps — alternatives and consequences are in the middle. Early stages include the emergence of a problem or concern out of which the issue develops. This model also clarifies the decision-making, implementation and evaluation stages.

The stages before “alternatives,” and after “consequences,” offer additional roles for the educator. A key feature of this model is the possible roles it suggests. The model assumes that an educator can determine an issue's stage, and then design and implement educational interventions appropriate for that stage. For example, in Stage 1, educators may help people understand a problematic situation. In Stage 2, they might help identify decision-makers and affected parties and get them involved. In Stage 3, they might help participants clarify their goals and understand the conflicting goals of other participants.

3. National Issues Forums Model (NIF):

The NIF model emphasizes steps that are similar to the alternatives and consequences model. The national issues forums are also geared toward exploring alternatives, but in this approach, the intended participants are ordinary citizens who don't necessarily have an official policy-making role, or even a direct personal stake in the issue. It especially emphasizes preparation of discussion leaders, agreement on ground rules, and “closing.” The latter is a step that asks participants to reflect on what they have come up with that is different from the usual positions taken on public issues.

The forums take the form of a town meeting and engage the public in deliberation about an issue. Written materials, called “issue books,” provide background information and outline three or four major options. The forums are discussions led by trained facilitators. The goal is to get people to move from initial opinions, to more thoughtful judgements which incorporate an understanding of others' viewpoints. The model emphasizes that making choices is difficult and illustrates this point. Group members are asked to work through their own conflicting emotions about the trade-offs that will have to be made to resolve the issue.

4. Citizen Politics Model:

The primary goal of the citizen politics model is to “bring the public back into politics.” This is accomplished by counteracting the dominant role played by politicians and professional policymakers. The idea is to make politics

something in which the public participates. The model is built around several key concepts:

- The idea of a “public world” that is different from people’s private lives, but equally important.
- “Self-interest” as a legitimate starting point for seeking solutions to shared problems.
- “Diversity” as a source of relevant experience and knowledge.
- “Power” as something that can be created by building relationships.

In practice, emphasis is usually placed on the early stages of the policy-making process — where problems are defined. People understand how they are affected, and key players are identified and brought into the perspectives. It also involves bringing diverse interests to the table, eliciting self-interests through storytelling, and building a mission statement that reflects the varied interests of the group.

Participants are often normally uninvolved in public life (young people, the elderly, the poor, racial and ethnic minorities). These groups receive help in building relationships with other key players who already work together redefining and solving problems.

Summary

When issues are identified in a community, leaders need to step forward as public educators. Sometimes they may be advocates with a specific solution in mind, but more importantly, they are needed to analyze the issue, look at options for resolution, communicate effectively with citizens and policy makers, and be aware of different methods for public policy involvement. With the proper training and desire, the public issues educator can make a difference in the community where they live.

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A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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UNIT IV: Community/ Public Policy Leadership Skills

Module 4: Influencing Policy Decisions

Citizens with skills and interests in the policy making process will find themselves much needed in the coming years. Pressing social and economic conditions and conflicting ideas about what to do about many problems lead to growing demands for creative leadership. This makes it worthwhile to learn about ways to become involved in the policy making process. Public decisions are made on the basis of facts, myths and values.

Communities need people who can:

- Define public problems and issues in a precise way.
- Obtain unbiased facts about issues and their impacts on people of different backgrounds.
- Come to agreement in conflict situations.
- Think through solutions to public problems that are in the majority interest but also protect the rights of the minority.

Citizens have a responsibility to make choices about how to solve problems — government alone cannot solve them all. Citizens' views often differ from those of officeholders. Deliberation may reveal new possibilities for action that neither citizens nor officeholders saw before.

Advocacy, in contrast to education, means personally working for a particular solution to a public problem. An advocate proposes and/or supports one position, action, or group in a policy debate. A person's advocacy position is based on emotions or personal values as well as facts.

Public Deliberation

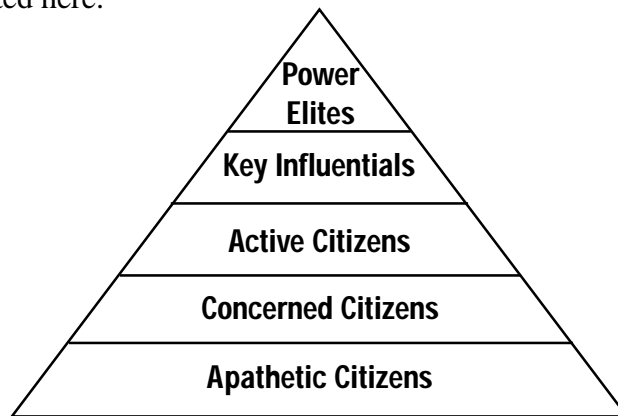
Democracy requires an ongoing deliberative dialogue about challenging public policy issues. Public deliberation occurs when people gather to talk about a community problem that is important to them. Participants deliberate with one another (eye-to-eye and face-to-face) to explore options, weigh others' views, and to consider the costs and consequences of public policy decisions. Public meetings or forums where people can both advance their own opinions and listen to those of others are a foundation for finding common ground.^{1,2}

Public deliberations enrich participants' thinking on public issues. The process helps people to see issues from different points of view. At their best, forums help participants move toward shared, stable, well-informed public judgments, based on what is valuable to them about important issues. Through deliberation, participants move from making individual choices to making choices as a public. Deliberation involves discussion and an exchange of ideas, whereas debate occurs after opinions have polarized.

Often citizens are seen as clients or customers of government. However, public forums operate on the premise that citizens must take responsibility for and act on their problems. Citizens cannot act together until they decide together. Public deliberation is a precondition for public action. Forums result in defining the area between agreement and disagreement, called common ground for action. This provides a general direction in which to move.

Citizen Participation

Individuals and groups are motivated to participate in community activities in response to some interest with which they identify. They may hope to protect a private or public resource, advance an agenda, balance or block the influence of another group. Based on differences in roles, technical expertise, and willingness and ability to commit time and energy to a process, individuals will participate at very different levels. People tend to move from apathy to concern or active involvement when an issue directly affects them. One way to picture this is the pyramid or triangle model illustrated here.³



Participation in consensus-building and collaborative decision-making processes should be thought of as dialogue between interested parties. Effective communication involves sharing and dialogue — getting information out to other citizens and interest groups, and collecting their ideas, issues and concerns. Citizen leadership includes formulating one's own choice, sharing this opinion with others, and listening to the views of others. Often this results in some modification of the original choice.

Participation Techniques

There are many ways to involve interested parties in a consensus-building process. Several common techniques to involve citizens in a process and solicit feedback are listed here. Many other methods, or combinations of methods, can be tailored to the needs of a specific community or situation.

Public Meetings and Workshops

Public meetings — whether town meetings, public hearings or workshops — are the most widely used public participation techniques.

Public hearings are usually formal meetings at which people present official statements of positions and assertions of fact. Such meetings do a good job of meeting legal requirements for the preparation of a formal record, but they are not well suited to bringing people together to solve difficult problems.

Problem-solving workshops may include problem identification, goal determination, brainstorming and priority-setting as methods of building group consensus about an issue.

Electronic Town Meetings

An increasing number of communities broadcast important meetings, such as city council meetings, over local television channels. Several have experimented with more participatory uses of television.

Focus Groups

Focus groups have been used by market research experts for decades. They help to assess consumer reaction to particular products, services or messages. More recently, this technique has been used to gain an understanding of public opinion. In a focus group, a small number of people are brought together in a confidential setting to discuss an issue with the assistance of a skilled facilitator.

Interviews

People will often provide more information through conversation than in public forums. For this reason, interviews offer a good way to gather detailed information on specific issues. Interviews can be used as a quick way to learn how citizens view a particular problem, or how they might be engaged in a public-involvement process.

Locating the Decision-Makers

Finding your way through the courthouse or city hall, and locating the appropriate official or agency can be a challenge. A variety of choices are available to citizens who want to participate in the decision-making process in their community. Entering into the political arena is often accidental for many — they become involved because they are interested in a particular issue. Lacking experience, they succeed in a trial and error fashion.

By finding out “why you go where” in local government, contrasting the different levels, and determining what can be reasonably expected from each level, the system becomes more understandable. Identifying consequences of these action choices can also be a tool for citizen groups. This identification can help them decide how to intervene in the policy-making process in the way that is best suited to their purpose. Although the sequence follows the flow of an issue through all potential channels, it is possible for citizens to select any approach at any time.⁴

Choices for local political action include:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Staff: | (Support staff provide administrative support to executive branches of government — agency personnel, committee staff, etc.) Staff are a source of information, advice and opinion. They can make small decisions within the scope of their procedures. As a rule, they have no authority for policy changes. |
| Elected Officials: | These persons are a source of information, advocates for policy changes, and intermediaries for citizen groups, citizens and staff. |
| Committees: | Committees such as standing, ad hoc, citizens, or subcommittees are typically an advisory level of government. |

They prepare recommendations for higher levels of government, and conduct the work leading up to decisions. They are characterized by: greater informality, more candid and detailed staff reviews, airing positions of all interested parties, and brokering or negotiating trade-offs between interest blocks.

Councils/
Boards/
Commissions: These groups are the final action, decision-making level for most cities, counties, districts and planning bodies. Frequently, decisions are results of committee recommendations. They are characterized by more formal procedures and presentations. The likelihood of action without a committee recommendation or referral is remote.

Media: The media is relevant to any discussion of the political process, although it is not a bona fide category of political action. Letters to the editor, feature stories, talk shows on current events and editorial board support are strategies for influencing public officials and contributing to the public debate.

Express Your Opinion

Whether you call it advocacy, lobbying, persuading, or influencing, it's important to know how to express your opinion effectively.

Lobbying is trying to persuade policy-makers and/or other citizens or groups — whether in city council, county commission, state legislature, or congress — to enact or change a policy to be favorable to your cause. It's that simple. The legislation may set up a new program, change an existing one, guarantee certain rights, appropriate funds, etc.^{5, 6}

There are still some persons for whom the word “lobbying” carries an ugly connotation. To them it conjures up visions of shady deals, bought and sold favors, and money passed under the table. Today, despite a few well-publicized exceptions, the great majority of legislators, and lobbyists alike are honest and dedicated servants.

Lobbying is Not for Experts Only

Sometimes people won't lobby because they're afraid they don't know how. They are supporters of their cause, they recognize the importance of lobbying, and they know it pays off. Yet, they hold back because of a mistaken notion that lobbying is only for experts. Like anyone else, the more you know about how to lobby, the better you will be. But again, if you can make a phone call or write a letter, you can lobby.

An effective lobbyist needs the following three things:

1. A few basic facts.
2. Belief in the cause.
3. Common sense.

The most important thing a lobbyist needs to know is the subject. What is the substance of the legislation you are proposing (or opposing)? Why is it so important? What will happen if it passes? What will happen if it does not pass? How much will it cost? Who will pay for it?

A new level of public involvement, often called citizen politics, has emerged in which citizens see public policy setting as a collaborative effort. This is especially true when either the problem and/or the solution is not clearly definable. This collaborative process empowers citizens to decide on the issue, expand the communication process, and develop an equitable and fair solution.

The results are more opportunities for community debate on many alternatives and consequences. Facilitators who have the skills and abilities to lead citizens through volatile discussions are needed by organizations and communities. Acceptable choices may be reached by ranking ideas and solutions from all participants, holding further discussions and gradually setting priorities. Citizen lobbyists move from the group discussion or educational setting to the active or advanced stage.

Guidelines for Lobbying

Although the role of a lobbyist may appear extremely complex, the citizen lobbyist can be effective if a few simple rules are followed.^{6,7} Today's general public is more aware of community issues than citizens were a decade ago. Citizens with inquiring minds and the courage to speak up are not afraid to ask high-level people questions, or to bring information to the attention of the media. While many issues are still being decided by powerful and financially strong interest groups, the ability of the average citizen to collect relevant information, address issues with intelligence, and initiate public meetings has made the public influence much stronger.⁵

Know your facts, and be accurate in expressing them.

Despite the myth that successful lobbying implied influence peddling, most effective lobbyist trade facts — not influence. What the citizen lobbyist may lack in experience and contacts, he or she can compensate for in knowledge and research. Accuracy and thoroughness are the hallmarks of successful lobbying campaigns. Self interest is the starting point for seeking solutions to shared problems. Self interest is not selfish interest, but an expression of values, concerns and experience.

During the course of any emotional campaign, there is always a temptation to overstate your case, manufacture statistics to fit your argument, or misrepresent your opponents' views. Resist this temptation. Your long-term credibility is far more important than any temporary advantage you may gain through prevarication.

Know the opposition.

For every cause, there will be opposition. An effective lobbyist will identify his or her opposition early in a lobbying campaign. The lobbyist will also try to fairly and accurately analyze the arguments and power sources of his or her opposition and attempt to neutralize them. At least as much time should be devoted to analysis and repudiation of your opponents' position as in developing your own case.

Look for Common Ground.

Look for common ground and shared interests. It is often more effective to negotiate than win "at any cost." Again, the watchword of a consistently successful

lobbyist is honesty and accuracy. Mischaracterizations of an opponent's position can be as damaging to your own credibility as misstatements of facts in arguing your own case.

Correct errors immediately.

Although expert lobbyists try to be accurate in every document or statement they make, errors inevitably creep in. This can result from the passage of time, changes in the facts, or simple misinterpretations of statistics, dates, legal citations, etc. And, with more individuals participating in a lobbying campaign, the more likely errors will occur.

Mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible after they are discovered. It is not enough merely to admit a mistake was made; you or your organization should also supply the accurate information at the time it corrects its error. Finally, your degree of public acknowledgment of the error should be dictated by the seriousness of the mistake. Usually, warning the recipients of the inaccurate information (that it should not be relied upon) and correcting the mistake in a low-key manner will be enough. It is always embarrassing to admit you're wrong, but it is political suicide if you don't.

Plan, coordinate and follow-up on each contact.

Much time, energy and intellect is wasted each year by lobbyists who have not carefully planned their approach. Each contact you make should be thoroughly researched in advance, careful notes should be kept of the content and results of meetings and each meeting should be followed up with written notes.

It does a lobbyist little good to develop a network of allies and then not use them. Friends should be kept fully informed of your activities, their questions and comments promptly addressed and, above all, they must be thanked for their contribution to your cause. Your skills and diligence in using your contacts will be a measure of your success.

Testifying at a Public Hearing

Testifying at a public hearing is one effective way to make your voice count. As you become interested in the policy-making process, attend meetings, forums and public hearings to see for yourself how the process works. Most of them are open to the public. Usually a phone call is required to get your name on the agenda if you wish to speak at a hearing. Giving testimony simply means expressing your views about a proposed regulation, law or other policy.^{6,8} The same principles for preparing any other presentation apply. Emphasize what you would like done very clearly, particularly if the information is already known to the group.

Purpose of Hearings

Many governmental bodies hold public hearings to give individuals and groups a chance to interact and exchange information. They are also held to provide citizens the opportunity to express their opinions to the policymaker.

- A governmental body may hold hearings to inform the public about a potential problem.
- Officials hold hearings to get help from the public in drafting regulations or developing long-range plans.
- Officials also hold hearings to find out how well a policy is working, or to respond to questions or complaints about a procedure or regulation.

Why Participate?

It is your right and responsibility as a citizen to be involved. It is important for you to voice your concern or interest in a decision (or potential decision) and provide reasons why it affects you and your family or community. You may be able to give information that can affect a decision. Decision-making bodies do not always see all the alternatives or perspectives until concerned citizens express their views.

You might also represent a group that wishes to make a public statement about an issue to show support or disapproval of a plan or decision. Do not imply that you represent an organization unless you are authorized by the organization to do so.

Preparing to Testify

Know the issue. Read the proposal, understand the implications, and talk to people with different views. You may want to review the fact sheet issue analysis in this series. Even if it is a local hearing, and you are planning informal, individual testimony, take the time to do your homework. You will feel more confident and will come across as a competent citizen.

It is also appropriate to raise questions in your testimony. You may have a question about the results of an action, which no one else has thought about.

Written testimony is important for a legislative hearing and/or if you are representing a group. Prepare neatly typed copy with your name, the name of the group, the issue and date. Make copies for each member of the board or committee and for the press.

Find Out the Time Schedule

Many legislative committees and other policy making groups operate on very tight time schedules. Therefore, there may be a timer or some other signal when the minutes of your appointment are up. So plan to highlight the most important thoughts first.

Giving Your Testimony

1. Stand and identify yourself immediately. State your name and tell who you are, for example — homemaker, parent or resident of the neighborhood to be affected. If you are representing a group, give the name in the first sentence. State the position of the group, and briefly tell how member opinion was determined.
2. Outline the problem as you see it, provide alternative suggestions or solutions if you oppose a proposal. Be clear, concise and brief. If relevant, refer to present laws or procedures and indicate how the proposal would affect those laws.
3. Address only one issue at a time. Don't wander off the subject. If you have detailed, technical information, don't include it in the testimony. Make group members aware of this information and attach it to copies of the testimony.
4. Avoid duplication. If several other speakers have already said what you planned to say, quickly summarize these points and try to concentrate on a point that hasn't been emphasized or on how the decision will impact you.

5. Be prepared to answer questions about your testimony. If you don't have the information to answer the question, try to follow-up after the meeting.
6. End your testimony with a one-sentence summary of your (or your group's) opinion. Thank the committee or board for the opportunity to testify.

How to Contact Government Officials

An elected official seldom tires of hearing from constituents. Letters from constituents are very important, and the quantity and quality of mail has been known to reverse many governmental positions.

It is important that government officials know your side of the story and how the proposed issue (action) affects you. Government officials cannot read your mind, nor can they listen in on your conversations with your family, friends or neighbors. *You must tell them.* Do not think your message is unimportant and would impose on your representative. When making up their mind on an issue, government officials do consider information and opinions given to them by their constituents. Informative letters requesting action on a specific subject of real concern are appreciated.^{6,8}

Writing Letters

- Typed or readable handwritten letters are acceptable.
- Provide your address and sign your name legibly.
- Use your own stationery (not company stationery and postage).

Guidelines for Letter Content

1. Write on only one subject at a time.
2. First put your thoughts in draft form. Then, delete the non-essentials and organize the letter into a brief, clear message. If possible, the letter should be limited to one typewritten page.
3. Explain briefly who you are and why you are concerned. If you are writing for a group, give its name and membership. (Numbers are important.)
4. Explain briefly what action you think should be taken and why.
5. If you are writing to several public officials on the same subject, do not send identical or photocopied letters. Individualize each, and use your own words.
6. If you are writing to a governmental official about a particular bill, identify it by number and name or content.
7. If you are writing about technical information, indicate your technical competence to do so.
8. Be courteous at all times, and personal when appropriate. Never threaten — either directly or by implication.
9. Consider proper timing. Write shortly before or at the time the particular subject (issue) is being discussed by the decision-making body.
10. Close with a statement of thanks and an expression of continued interest in future action.

11. Don't limit your letter to support or opposition to a particular action. Send a note of appreciation to members of the decision-making body when they have taken action of which you approve. They, too, like praise.

How to Address Letters

1. Local Officials

<p>MAYOR</p> <p>The Honorable (full name) City or Town Hall City, State, Zip</p> <p>Dear Mayor (last name):</p>	<p>COUNCILMAN (Councilor if a woman)</p> <p>Councilman/Councilor (full name) City or Town Hall City, State, Zip Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (last name):</p>
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2. State Officials

<p>GOVERNOR</p> <p>The Honorable (full name) State Capitol Building City, State, Zip</p> <p>Dear Governor (last name):</p>	<p>STATE SENATOR</p> <p>Honorable (full name) State Senate State Capitol Building City, State, Zip</p> <p>Dear Senator (last name):</p>	<p>STATE REPRESENTATIVE</p> <p>Honorable (full name) House of Representatives State Capitol Building City, State, Zip</p> <p>Dear Representative (last name):</p>
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3. Federal Officials

<p>THE PRESIDENT</p> <p>The President of the United States (one line) The White House Washington, D.C. 20500</p> <p>Dear President (last name):</p> <p>Respectfully yours,</p>	<p>U.S. SENATOR</p> <p>Honorable (full name) Russell Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510</p> <p>Dear Senator (last name):</p> <p>Sincerely yours,</p>	<p>U.S. REPRESENTATIVE</p> <p>Honorable (full name) House of Representatives House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515</p> <p>Dear Congressman (last name):</p> <p>Sincerely yours,</p>
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Faxes and E-mails should also follow similar guidelines. Communication methods can be fast and effective. In general, brevity and clarity are even more important through these media.

A follow-up letter of thanks is appropriate and welcomed by governmental officials. In this letter, summarize the conversation (thus documenting the information) and thank the official for his or her time and interest.

Making Telephone Calls

A phone call to your governmental official can communicate as well as a letter. If there is a time deadline, a call can be even more effective. During the legislative session, the Kansas legislature maintains a toll-free telephone number. A citizen can call this number and ask to have the legislator or a staff member return the call, so there is no expense to the citizen. Toll-free telephone service is also available to provide information about the status of legislation under consideration.

Use the same guidelines for telephone communications that you would when writing a letter. Above all, be organized, well-informed on the subject, brief and courteous.

Making Personal Visits

A common difficulty encountered by people just beginning to get involved is not knowing where to go within the governmental institutions. Take time to get acquainted. Ask questions and try to find out who the decision-makers really are. In most policy-making processes, much of the work is done by staff, committees and interested citizens — before the decision comes up for a public vote. This is often the time when your opinion has the most impact.

Talk to many people as you explore the different parts of your government. In your own community, find the locations where informal discussion leads to important decisions — often in a restaurant or other place where community leaders tend to gather. Attend meetings of the city council, county commissioners, chamber of commerce and board and committee meetings. Introduce yourself — don't just sit in the back row.

It's usually more convenient for everyone if you make an appointment prior to the meeting. When you call, identify yourself and the issue or topic you wish to discuss. You can ask to see either your official or one of his or her top staff persons. You might also schedule an appointment just to get acquainted — to tell your official that your organization is expanding its work on public citizenship, public issues or to indicate your interest in a particular problem or opportunity. Getting to know your representatives before you ask for something is a valuable strategy.

If you are visiting about a specific issue, you should plan to provide the official with a brief summary of your views.

Working Through Groups

Public decisions are usually most effectively influenced by the actions of groups, although one person can be highly persuasive when acting alone to initiate action. As with other groups, teams, or organizations, attention to the stages of group development and goal setting are critical. When citizens as individuals and as groups work together, their power is multiplied. Synergy increases their effectiveness and expands the resource base.

Types of Groups

There are many ways of defining community groups that engage in problem solving and policy influencing behavior.⁷ Some commonly used definitions are

ALLIANCE: Individuals or organizations working together in a common effort for a common purpose to make more effective use of resources (a coalition).

COALITION: Individuals or organizations working together in a common effort for a common purpose to make more effective and efficient use of resources, an alliance.

COLLABORATION: The process of individuals or organizations sharing resources and responsibilities jointly to plan, implement and evaluate programs to achieve common goals.

COOPERATION: Individuals or organizations associating to accomplish a common goal; usually less formal than collaboration.

COORDINATION: Individuals or organizations working together to accomplish a common goal with efforts to share information and reduce duplication.

NETWORK: Individuals or organizations who share information, ideas, resources or goals to accomplish individual or group goals.

PARTNERSHIP: Individuals or organizations working together in a side-by-side effort to accomplish a common goal with a shared sense of purpose and a shared responsibility for the outcome.

Team Work

Team work is certainly nothing new. Every group or team develops its own pattern of interaction as it goes through various phases. As trust and cooperation develop, group members and the leaders or facilitators begin to think in terms of “We” instead of “I” or “They”. Loyalty and respect for one another are shown. Working together for the common goal and taking responsibility for group tasks becomes a high priority.

The word “synergism” is often used to describe what teamwork can accomplish. Synergism means a cooperative action where the total effect is greater than the sum of the effects taken independently. This is the bonus that we can derive from successfully uniting our individual talents.

Networks and coalitions are examples of cooperative community groups described in the following section.

Networks

The ability to create and use networks is an important strategy for sharing ideas and gaining support. In the simplest terms, a network is a collection of people you know who you can count on for some kind of help — and who you may be able to help.

Networks are informal and functional. They can help everyone by exchanging information, skills and resources. Sometimes informal networks develop into more structured coalitions or other groups. The ability to create and use networks is an important strategy for personal success — on-the-job, in professional organizations, in volunteer work and for political action. Networking helps us gain information, ideas, resources, and influence in order to accomplish goals.

When your group is planning to work on a community project or study an issue, it is wise to take time during a meeting to develop a network list. Share ideas about individuals and other groups who might have some interest in linking with your group, for information, resource-sharing, or strategies to achieve a common goal. Also, make a list of members from your organization who could provide information, services or access to other groups. You can make this information available to staff people, officials, or other policymakers or potential funders. These persons often need information on issues and projects. Let these people know that you have referred others to them. Don't hesitate to list yourselves — informed citizens or consumers often are hard for decision-makers to locate.

Coalitions

Coalitions or alliances develop when a common problem or goal can best be addressed by more than one organization. They can be informal or formal. To develop a coalition, members of one group contact and join with other organizations who also support this goal. Coalitions can be very effective because they increase the number of people involved, and they bring more power to your cause. Coalitions can sometimes be in name only — but they are far more effective if people and other resources of the organizations are committed to the cause. Coalitions are often formed to deal with one issue only, and they disband when the issue has been solved.⁷

Steps to Organizing a Coalition

1. Consider all possible groups that might join a coalition.

Get groups by soliciting them from members or by looking up social service agencies, chamber of commerce and local social service directories in the yellow pages.

2. Classify by type of organization.

Is it a service organization, special interest, social or religious? Is one group predominant? If so, then that could provide a clue as to the make-up of the community.

3. Do some homework on each group.

What does this organization do? Have they been involved in solving community problems before? Have they supported issues similar to yours? By gathering information on a group, you will learn its views, who its members are, how much power it has, and who controls it.

4. Evaluate which organizations you think would or would not support your issue.

It is important to know who your opponents are. Knowing how and what your opponents think (and why they think the way they do) can be invaluable to your cause.

5. Approach the groups.

When you approach an organization to join your coalition, define the issue in a way that will appeal to their interest and benefit, as well as your own. Only ask organizations to join your coalition if the organization will contribute more than it demands, and if that organization will not create problems that will weaken your organization or cause a split on the issue.

Cultivate your allies.

There is hardly an issue that does not attract or repel a number of groups for widely different reasons. Your chances of succeeding in a lobbying campaign will be enormously enhanced if you join with other groups who share your aims. Allies don't just happen, they must be sought out and cultivated. In the nation's capital you are likely to find them in the most unlikely places — even among groups which have traditionally opposed you. In seeking allies, keep your eye on the ultimate objective of the lobbying campaign, not the positions or personalities of your allies. Few political objectives worth achieving can be gained without allies of some sort.

Merely gaining allies, however, is not enough. You must be sure they do their part. Specifically, make sure your friends keep their promises and abide by the same standards of credibility and integrity you set for yourself. In writing, announce specific goals and projects each group will be expected to perform. Make sure you keep your part of the deal and they keep theirs.

Summary

As educators, leaders make valuable contributions by helping people learn the methods to express their preferences most effectively. Special communication techniques, such as testifying, interviewing or lobbying; planning and conducting public meetings; building networks, teams and coalitions, and developing relationships with decision-makers are skills which can be acquired. The educator leader also enlists the aid of those with technical knowledge to provide and interpret information, and distinguish facts from myths.

As active citizens, people use a variety of techniques to clarify their opinions, consider the viewpoints of others, and convey these ideas to the relevant policymakers. The decision to become an advocate is an important one with several implications, each person's advocacy stance incorporates personal values, because even in the same organization or profession, values are seldom held by everyone.

There are several effective strategies for influencing policy decisions. It's important that your voice and that of your organization is heard. Democracy requires an ongoing deliberative dialogue about challenging public policy. Public involvement by personal contact, lobbying, testifying, networking, and coalitions can all make a difference in the decisions affecting your community.

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A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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