

# Co-operantics

## Co-operative skills for everyone

### TEAM BEHAVIOUR: Task and Process

*“it’s not what you do, it’s the way that you do it ...” – Bananarama*

Sometimes we focus so much on the task in hand, we may have a tight deadline or a large workload, that we forget to pay attention to how we are working together. Is everyone participating? Are there skills or experience in the team that we are not aware of because we didn’t stop to ask?

The questionnaire below will help you identify whether there is a good balance of task and process behaviour in your team, and if there isn’t, what you can do about it.

#### Questionnaire: My team behaviour

Each of the following statements describes an aspect of team behaviour. In the space next to each item, write 5 if you *always* behave that way, 4 if you *frequently* behave that way, 3 if you *occasionally* behave that way, 2 if you *seldom* behave that way and 1 if you *never* behave that way.

#### When working as a member of my team:

Score	
	1. I offer facts and information and give my opinions, ideas, and feelings in order to help the group discussion
	2. I encourage other members of the group to participate. I am open to their ideas. I let them know I value their contributions to the group
	3. I ask for facts, information, opinions, ideas and feelings from other group members
	4. I help group communications by using good communication skills. I help other members understand what others say
	5. I help to give direction to the group by planning work, calling attention to the tasks that need to be done & the allocation of tasks
	6. I tell jokes and suggest interesting ways of doing the work in order to reduce tension and increase the fun we have working together
	7. I pull together related ideas or suggestions made by group members
	8. I observe the way the group is working and use my observations to help discuss how the group can work together better
	9. I give the group energy. I encourage group members to work hard to achieve our goals
	10. I promote the open discussion of conflicts and mediate conflicts amongst members if necessary
	11. I ask others to summarise what has been said in order to check my understanding
	12. I express support, acceptance, liking and praise for other members of the team

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### Analysis: My team behaviour

TASK	Score		PROCESS	Score	
1		information and opinion giver	2		encourager of participation
3		information and opinion seeker	4		communication facilitator
5		direction and role definer	6		tension reliever
7		summariser	8		process observer
9		energiser	10		interpersonal problem solver
11		checker for understanding	12		supporter and praiser
		TOTAL TASK SCORE			TOTAL PROCESS SCORE

As you can see, Task behaviour focuses on getting the task done, sharing information about how it will be performed, setting direction and delegation. Summarising agreement, generating enthusiasm and checking that everyone understands what they have to do can also be described as Task behaviour, which focuses on **what** needs to be done.

However it's also essential to consider **how** the team will work together. Is everyone on board? Maybe we have jumped in to talking about what needs to happen before we have found out what skills, experience and knowledge we have sitting round the table? Perhaps someone is feeling hurt or excluded and is therefore not contributing useful knowledge or experience? People who focus on how we work together – the Process – will encourage everyone to participate, perhaps noticing that a reticent person has not spoken, relieving tension with a joke or reframing a tactless remark.

The ideal team would produce a more or less equal score on both the above columns. However individuals will score higher and lower on different behaviours. The trick is to balance out someone who is highly task focused with someone who pays more attention to the process.

If your score is lower for one column, try to increase the behaviour in which your score is lowest, eg if you score low on 'supporter and praiser' try giving someone a pat on the back from time to time, when something has gone well. Most people enjoy receiving praise for their efforts!