

Guidelines for Developing and Defining Shared Core Values

“The purpose of establishing a set of values is to create a code of behavior that builds a cohesive culture and supports the vision and mission. The values provide a framework within which every member of the organization can operate with responsible freedom. When individuals fully embrace the organization’s values, everyone becomes mutually accountable. Values that are shared build trust and create community. They also create cohesion and unity.”

-- Richard Barrett: *Liberating the Corporate Soul – Building a Visionary Organization and Building a Values Driven Organization – A Whole System Approach*

Nominate a person from the group to facilitate this process. Nominate a different person to be the “scribe” who will write the results of the process in table form on a white-board or in a spreadsheet.

Brainstorm a short list of 5-7 values. If you have more than 7, ask each team member to rate each value on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is not important and 5 is most important. Total up the ratings for each value. The 5 values which have the highest totals are selected for the team.

Process for Defining Core Values (see example on next page):

1. Definition - What does this core value mean for us?
2. Describe why this is our core value. This is the underlying reason for discerning that this is one of the core values of the team or organization. Take time to fully explore this question. Talk through scenarios and apply the core value in each scenario as part of the exploration.
3. What must this team or organization do specifically to demonstrate this value?
4. [Optional but recommended] What leader behaviors demonstrate this value?
5. What individual behavior demonstrates this value? How would this value be reflected in the way individuals relate to each other?
6. How does this value align with the agreed-upon Purpose of this class?

Once you have defined your core values, nominate a person to share the values and their definitions only (not the rest of the detail) with the class – 2 minutes maximum.

Take a photo of your resulting core values and definitions so team members have a copy. You will revisit these values as you continue to work together in your self-managing teams.

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Example:

Core Value	Rationale (Why)	Organizational Actions	Individual Behaviors
Value	Why is this one of our core values? What is the rationale?	What must we do as a team or organisation do to demonstrate this value?	What individual behavior demonstrates this value? How would this value be reflected in the way individuals relate to each other?
Respectful Communication			
Definition: <i>To be free to speak honestly AND be heard without judgment & with receptivity, to be mindful & respectful of ALL</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand each other more deeply. • A way to demonstrate compassion. • To allow authentic freedom of expression. • To help people get their needs met. • To express love. • Provide the safety to be real. • Respectful communication is an avenue for forgiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for empowerment. • Encourage people to express ideas, emotions, and perspectives. • Model acceptance and respect. • Provide platforms and structures to support respectful communication. • Provide opportunities to learn. • Continue the Appreciative Inquiry process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to new ideas, express curiosity. • Participate actively in dialog and communication processes. • Practice active listening. • Be non-judgmental. • Practice acceptance, honor and respect in all relationships • Be receptive to each person's ideas, emotions, and perspectives. • Practice generosity.