

# Teamwork Strategies

## "Can't We All Just Get Along" - Improving Team Communication and Collaboration

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*"Team members have an obligation to contribute relevant observations and insights and to offer suitable recommendations based on their professional knowledge, experience, and training."*

1. **Avoid Ego-Centered Communications**—Focus statements on the substantive issue at hand rather than attempting to be “right” or win an argument.
2. **Avoid Downward Communication**—Ensure that all team members, regardless of status or authority, have an equal opportunity to speak.
3. **Practice Attentive Listening**—Hear all aspects of a team member’s statements before thinking about or forming a response.
4. **Engage in Empathy**—Imagine yourself in other team members’ positions to understand issues from their perspective.
5. **Reinforce Others’ Statements**—Express appreciation for a team member’s input before making counterarguments or changing the subject.
6. **Find Common Ground**—Acknowledge areas of agreement among team members before making counterarguments.
7. **Reframe Statements Neutrally**—Restate a position in a manner that minimizes counterproductive affect such as anger or frustration.
8. **Ensure Inclusiveness**—Ensure that all team members weigh in on subjects within their area of expertise or experience.
9. **Sum Up**—The judge should recap the various arguments and positions, assure the team that all positions were considered carefully, and explain his or her rationale for reaching a conclusion or tabling the matter pending further information.

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### REFERENCES

Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards, Volume II, *Multidisciplinary Team*:  
<http://www.nadcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Best-Practice-Standards-Vol.-II..pdf>

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