Strengthening Success
Team Purpose

Contents

Purpose

All teams experience difficult situations that result in conflict and decreased productivity. During these times, it is important for members to be self-reflective and clarify the team's purpose.

Tool Set B can support Team Leads to facilitate difficult conversations that connect team members to each other and the work of improving student outcomes.

How & When to Use

When a Success Team Lead becomes aware of major conflicts and/or a lack of progress due to team dynamics (i.e. conflicting priorities, philosophical differences), there is a need to refocus efforts. We recommend the use of a protocol from Tool Set B to create a safe space for honest and productive conversations.

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The Freshman Success Framework is the foundation for effective school practice on On-Track and student success. The Network for College Success has seen the greatest and most sustainable gains for freshmen when schools develop high-functioning educator professional learning communities, which we call Success Teams.

This Tool Set focuses on the below actions of a Success Team stemming from the Freshman Success Framework.

Elements	Success Team
Setting Conditions	• Develops effective meeting strategies, such as establishing a mission statement and clear purpose, and building norms and action-oriented agendas • Shares Success Team roles and responsibilities conducive to freshman success work

This Tool Set also highlights the actions stemming from the Framework for the Principal and Team Lead in support of the Success Team work.

Team Lead

• Setting Conditions: Acquires foundational knowledge on the importance of freshman course performance as well as tools and strategies to lead the Success Team

• Implementation: Establishes team meeting conditions conducive to the successful execution of Success Team duties

Principal

• Setting Conditions: Selects, programs, sets purpose, and provides foundational knowledge on freshman success work for core set of grade-level teachers

Modified Hopes and Fears Protocol

An activity that acknowledges significant events and related fears in order to move a team forward while providing space for individual processing.

SETTING CONDITIONS
FOR SUCCESS

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT   193

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Modified Hopes and Fears Protocol

Purpose

To acknowledge the impact of a significant event and to create space for members to anchor themselves in the hopes they hold for their work together moving forward.

Timing & Grouping

This protocol can vary from 20 to 60 minutes, depending on the size of the group and the range of members' concerns. If the group is particularly large, the facilitator can ask table groups to work together and then report out.

Supplies

Newsprint/chart paper, sticky notes, writing utensils, markers

Agreements

- **Confidentiality -** Our personal stories stay in. Our shared commitments are socialized.
- **No judgment zone -** Different events impact people in different ways. We agree to listen to one another with a compassionate ear.
- **Solutions-oriented discourse -** While we are sharing our fears, we acknowledge that they can cause stagnation. Therefore, we commit to stepping into our hopes.

Steps

1. **Introduction.** The facilitator names the impactful event and asks members to silently write on a sticky note their greatest fear or concern about it. Then, the facilitator asks them to think about their greatest hope for the work moving forward and to write it on a separate sticky note.

2. **Pair Share.** The facilitator asks members to share their fears and hopes with a partner.

3. **Listing.** Members create a "Fears" column and a "Hopes" column on a sheet of newsprint/chart paper using their sticky notes. All fears and hopes are posted without comment or judgment.

   Note: if the group is particularly large, create smaller groups for this step and assign a scribe.

4. **Processing.** The facilitator provides time for members to silently read the lists.

5. **Discussion Questions.** What trends or themes do you see in the fears? In the hopes? Based on the trends in our hopes, what 2 or 3 commitments can we focus on to propel our work together?

**SETTING CONDITIONS
FOR SUCCESS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

194

NETWORK
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Based on the School Reform Initiative Hopes and Fears Protocol.

Modified Hopes and Fears Protocol (cont.)

For groups that have been divided into smaller groups –

6. Each group will discuss the questions in step 5 and report out one core theme around fears, one core theme around hopes, and one commitment. Facilitator scribes the commitments on newsprint/chart paper.

7. The facilitator asks, "Of the commitments listed, which 2 or 3 will we collectively agree to move forward?" Remind the team that the commitments anchor how we interact with one another to realize the hopes we hold for our work.

8. **Debrief the process.** How was this process helpful? In what ways did it challenge or push you? How might you use this protocol in your practice?

A Few Facilitation Tips

• The facilitator can participate by listing his or her fears and hopes as well.

• Do not skip steps! For some, just writing their fears and hopes is personally cathartic. For others, it is the collective consideration of the impact which will be powerful in setting commitments moving forward.

• Remember, the commitments made serve as an anchor for your work moving forward. In debriefing with the lead(s) of the team or group, explicitly ask how these commitments are embedded in the work.

• Thank members for sharing!

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NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

195

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Based on the School Reform Initiative Hopes and Fears Protocol.

Cleaning the Lens Protocol

This protocol re-establishes individual commitments by reconnecting team members with the work on a personal level.

SETTING CONDITIONS
FOR SUCCESS

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT   196

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Cleaning the Lens Protocol

This protocol provides participants with the opportunity to (1) reconnect on a personal level with the foundational beliefs that drew them into the work that is currently presenting a challenge, and (2) prioritize time and energy toward activities that are vital and important to fulfilling the purpose of the work.

Time	Roles	Materials
30 minutes	Facilitator and scribe	Chart paper, markers, "Cleaning the Lens Protocol Worksheet" for participants

Revisit Your Personal Foundation (3 minutes)

1. In a sentence or two, articulate the purpose for your work.

2. Why is this work significant to you? What has kept you resilient in the work up to this point?

Assessing Responsibilities (5 minutes)

3. List the current work responsibilities vying for your time and energy.

4. What responsibilities do you view as vital to fulfilling the purpose of your work?
   These responsibilities address the essence of the work. Without them, the entire work crumbles.

5. What responsibilities are important to fulfilling the purpose of your work?
   These responsibilities enhance the product of your work.

Assessing Time Commitment (3 minutes)

6. To fulfill each vital responsibility you noted, how much time per week is required for you to do each one well?

7. To fulfill each important responsibility you noted, how much additional time per week is required for you to do each one well?

**SETTING CONDITIONS
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NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

197

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Cleaning the Lens Protocol (cont.)

Refocusing Efforts (5 minutes)

8. What are you currently doing that is misaligned with the purpose of your work?

9. What is at stake, to gain or lose, by continuing to perform these duties in conjunction with the work that you have identified as vital and/or important?

10. How have you contributed to this misalignment?

Moving From Thoughts To Action (3 minutes)

11. What are your next steps to bring your efforts in closer alignment to the purpose of your work? By when?

12. Who can you enlist to hold you accountable for taking your next steps?

Enlisting Help For Follow Through (10 minutes)

13. In dyads, share your responses and enlist your partner to hold you accountable for having the next steps completed by your target date.

14. If time allows, share your next steps with the group. The scribe takes notes so participants can check in on their progress at the next meeting.

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FOR SUCCESS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

198

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SUCCESS