

The Team Problem Solving Protocol

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Improvements in Team Performance often start with problem solving. The team chooses something that is not going well and improves it ... to the benefit of all. That is how it is supposed to work.

You are very likely to be on several teams each of which are involved in several projects right now and you will launch even more projects going forward. In our work with many healthcare teams, we have found most projects are hampered by a flawed structure right off the bat. This is because most teams do not have a checklist to ensure the project structure is complete before they dive into the action plan.

Here is a framework for leading your team to create problem solving projects that work. You focus on asking questions, while the team creates a solution to the team's problem.

Make sure you complete each step in the checklist or your project will suffer. The step we most see leaders skip is brainstorming a tracking metric. If your project is worth doing, it is worth tracking your effectiveness and progress. Don't launch a project without a metric ever again.

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1) CREATE PROBLEM LIST

Use your TEAM to create a master problem list for your team/committee/department/organization

2) PRIORITIZE

Pick one problem to address
One at a time here - the Plate Spinning Theory of Leadership
Make sure you have consensus on this problem being addressed first
"I can live with that and support it"

3) IDENTIFY THE VISION (IN THE BACKGROUND)

All problems point to an unfulfilled VISION
You can fix the problem and you will only have a fixed problem
What if your VISION is bigger than that?

Example:

"Well, team, we are suffering from "Problem X"
And we could fix "Problem X", but before we do that let's ask this question:

In an Ideal World, how could we design this component of our wing/ward/unit so that this issue doesn't even exist?

What else would we change if we could take the area where "Problem X" exists, wave a magic wand and make it work perfectly for us?"

4) BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS

If we are headed towards this VISION, what are your ideas on how we might proceed?

More ideas are better

No judgment

You must hold the brainstorm context here - NO EVALUATION, MORE IS BETTER

5) PICK A SOLUTION / STRATEGY

Pick one to implement

Consensus check

6) ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

Don't lose your creativity here

Another round of brainstorming

What is the best way to implement this solution/strategy component quickly?

So we can start gathering data to see if it is working

Who will be responsible for what?

CREATE A RAPID FEEDBACK LOOP

NOTE: the following two steps are the ones most commonly missing in healthcare team projects. Do not launch a project without these two bases covered. If you are leading a project now that does not have a metric or a follow up and communication plan, get those in place ASAP!

7) PICK A METRIC

What is your metric - what are you tracking?

Something that tells you quickly if you are moving in the right direction

Or headed off the rails

Simpler is better

Don't get IT involved if you can help it

6) FOLLOW UP/COMMUNICATION PLAN

Who is in charge of this project?

When and How will they communicate with the group?

When will we reconvene to discuss progress and make adjustments?

7) REFINE AND REPEAT

Once you have results report them back to the group

Run the After Action Review on Your Results

Refine this project and action plan

REPEAT: Run this cycle again as needed

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The Team Problem Solving Protocol is just one of the Burnout Prevention Tools from StopNurseBurnout.com. Here are even more options ...

1) Buy the book: "*Stop Nurse Burnout – What to Do When Working Harder Isn't Working*"

This is the first step-by-step self help guide for nurses to prevent burnout for good. It is a complete system to build a more Ideal Career and a much more balanced life.

[Click Here to learn more and get your copy](#) – including an additional 6 Power Tools at the website.

2) Visit StopNurseBurnout.com for additional resources and tools to lower stress, build more life balance and a more Ideal Career

- Stress Management and Burnout Treatment and Prevention
- Nurse Leadership Development
- Nurse Wellness and Engagement Resources

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That's all for now. Keep breathing and have a great rest of your day,



Elizabeth

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www.StopNurseBurnout.com