

Building and Leading Resilient Teams: Module 2



Module 2: Boost teamwork by developing cohesion among team members.

The best measure of a team is how well it performs under pressure. When the going gets tough, the tough get going... by working together as a team. This maxim holds true for front-line teams, executive teams, and all other teams in between, including yours. You can boost teamwork by developing the cohesion of your team. The result will be more supportive and dependable relationships. Developing cohesion enhances well-being, reduces stress, and enables your team's creativity and collective decision-making. Cohesive teams in the workplace are better able to overcome adversity, and then adapt and grow together because of that adversity.

Why build and lead resilient teams?

Collective resilience is the team's ability to overcome adversity, and then adapt and grow together because of that adversity. Resilient teams are the key to both individual and organizational resilience. Resilient teams are stronger together and they make learning and change possible.

This module consists of two "at home" assignments (6 hours) that must be completed prior to the facilitated discussion (1-3 hours). Completing the preparatory assignments is essential for engaged participation in the facilitated discussion.

[Learning Objectives for Developing Cohesion](#) (Module 2)

Assignment 1. Learn the following key terms and ideas. Knowing these key terms and ideas is essential to understanding the concepts that support each leader task in this module. (0.5 hours)

Key Terms and Ideas

- **Cohesion** is the extent to which a team will stick together and remain united, even in the face of adversity.
- **Social cohesion** is the strength of relationships and sense of solidarity among team members.
- **Task cohesion** is how well a team works together to achieve common goals and objectives.
- **Shared leadership** is characterized by collaborative decision-making and collective responsibility for outcomes.
- **Social trust** is having faith that others on your team have good intentions and will not harm your interests.
- **Task trust** is being able to confidently rely on others to do their part in getting the job done.
- **Dignity** is the inherent importance, value, and worth of a person.
- **Active listening** is seeking to understand meaning and intent without preemptively judging.
- **Collective efficacy** is the belief that a group can meet challenges and complete tasks together successfully.
- **Coping** is what a person does to minimize stress.
- **After-action review (AAR)** is a technique for improving execution by scrutinizing the outcomes of an action.

Assignment 2. Reflect on your unique leader/follower experience with each of the leader tasks and concepts below. Consider ALL the reflection questions, prepare notes, and be ready to discuss during the facilitated discussion. The reading is provided to help you gain a better understanding of the leader tasks and concepts. The reading will also prompt critical reflection on your leader/follower experience. (5.5 hours)

Note to Students and Instructors: Instructors may assign additional reading or relevant videos at their discretion.

Collective resilience is the team's ability to overcome adversity, and then adapt and grow together because of that adversity. As you work through this module, consider the following question. *How does developing cohesion build collective resilience?*

Leader Tasks and Concepts

1. Analyze team cohesion.

Cohesion is the extent to which a team will stick together and remain united, even in the face of adversity. Cohesive teams are characterized by collaboration between people that support and depend on each other. The best measure of cohesion is teamwork.

- *How would you rate the cohesion of your team?*
- *Did your team remain united during a recent crisis?*
- *Have you worked on a team previously that were especially cohesive? How did that team become so cohesive?*

Cohesion is a dynamic construct. Social cohesion is the strength of relationships and sense of solidarity among team members. Task cohesion is how well a team works together to achieve common goals and objectives. Both social cohesion and task cohesion develop over time.

- *Does your team have more social cohesion or task cohesion?*
- *How does your team develop social cohesion?*
- *How does your team develop task cohesion?*
- *Is social cohesion or task cohesion more important in your line of work? Why?*

When teams are cohesive, people are more flexible, creative, and open to new ideas. Cohesive teams are better at solving problems and overcoming challenges. Developing cohesion is essential for building resilient teams.

- *Are you personally more flexible, creative, and open to new ideas when you are working on a cohesive team?*
- *In your experience, how does boosting teamwork help teams overcome adversity and the adapt and grow together because of that adversity.*

Reading:

[What will Make or Break your Next Role? Find out Why Teamwork Matters](#)

[What I Learned About Team Cohesion From Little League Baseball](#)

[Building a Cohesive Team: Challenges and Tips for Leaders](#)

[7 Work-From-Home Rituals for Virtual Teams](#)

[In-Depth: How Coherence And Cohesion Are Critical To Scrum](#)

[Why Understanding 'Team Cohesion' can Build Organisational Resilience?](#)

2. Organize people to work in teams.

Leaders should assign tasks to teams instead of individuals whenever possible. Teams benefit from diverse experience and expertise. Sometimes, people self-organize informally into teams to get work done. Many organizations create and support project teams to get work done. Working in teams helps develop cohesion.

- *Do you prefer to work on tasks alone or with a team? Why?*
- *Have you worked for someone that missed opportunities to assign tasks to teams instead of individuals?*
- *Is self-organizing into teams to get work done a routine practice in your line of work?*
- *Have you worked on a project team to get work done? Did that team develop cohesion? If not, why not?*

Working in teams instead of individual silos creates the potential for shared leadership. Shared leadership is characterized by collaborative decision-making and collective responsibility for outcomes. Shared leadership can be especially effective during times of adversity.

- *Do the people on your team collaborate to make decisions? If not, why not?*
- *Do the people on your team share responsibility for outcomes? If not, why not?*
- *Based on your experience, what are some other challenges and best practices for organizing people to work in teams?*

Reading:

[Collaboration is Key](#)

[Teamwork](#)

[Five Surprising Facts About Teams and Teamwork](#)

[Why Team Members Should Be Involved in Decision-Making](#)

[Tough Teams](#)

3. Promote trust between team members.

Teams develop social trust and task trust between team members. Social trust is having faith that others on your team have good intentions and will not harm your interests. Task trust is being able to confidently rely on others to do their part in getting the job done. Promoting trust between team members helps develop cohesion. Most team-building events are aimed at promoting social trust and cohesion.

- *How would you rate the social trust between members of your team? Could it improve?*
- *How would you rate the task trust between members of your team? Could it improve?*
- *In your line of work, is social trust or task trust more important? Why?*
- *In your experience, how does trust between team members affect teamwork?*

Leaders can promote social trust by providing opportunities for people to get to know each other. Leaders can promote task trust between team members by recognizing people for their competence and contributions to the team. Leaders should be attentive to any loss of trust between team members.

- *In your organization, are there opportunities for people to get to know each other at work? Can more opportunities be created?*
- *Have you ever worked for someone that did not recognize the competence and contributions of people on their team? How did that affect the team?*
- *In your line of work, what are the indicators of lost trust between team members?*
- *In your experience, is it possible for team members to regain lost trust? If not, why not?*
- *Based on your experience, what are some other challenges and best practices for promoting trust between team members?*

Reading:

[Build a Circle of Trust with Your Team](#)

[Trust](#)

[7 Misunderstood Truths About Workplace Trust](#)

[Building Trust in a Skeptical Era](#)

[Why the Key to Virtual Team Effectiveness Is Team Trust](#)

4. Ensure mutual respect between team members.

Without mutual respect between team members, cohesion cannot develop. Respect is often gauged by the tone of a person's voice and their body language. Courtesy and kindness are indicators of respect. Ensuring mutual respect between team members helps develop cohesion.

- *Do the people on your team recognize the inherent dignity of their peers?*
- *Do the people on your team practice active listening with their peers?*
- *Do the people on your team value the opinions of their peers?*
- *In your experience, how does mutual respect between team members affect teamwork?*

Leaders should be attentive to disrespectful treatment between team members. Sometimes, people will be reluctant to speak up for themselves. It is a leader's responsibility to address disrespectful behavior in the workplace.

- *In your line of work, is there any form of disrespect that is prevalent?*
- *Have you ever been reluctant to speak up for yourself at work when you were treated disrespectfully? If so, why?*
- *Have you worked for someone that was unwilling to address issues of disrespectful treatment in the workplace?*
- *How have you addressed instances of disrespectful treatment between team members?*
- *Based on your experience, what are some other challenges and best practices for ensuring mutual respect between team members?*

Reading:

[Create a Respectful Work Environment](#)

[How to Create a Better Workplace](#)

[Incivility in the Workplace](#)

[A New Look at Workplace Diversity](#)

[5 Ways to Inspire Your Colleagues to Speak Up](#)

5. Train the team.

Team training is an iterative process that occurs as teams work together over time. On-the-job team training is situated in real experience and should be continuous. Constructive feedback from leaders and team members is essential and should become habit. Regularly scheduled formal team training should augment on-the-job training. Training the team helps develop cohesion.

- *Does your team see every day as an opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills?*
- *Does your team welcome constructive feedback?*
- *How often does your team participate in structured training events? Are those training events mostly effective or mostly not effective? Why?*

As teams successfully learn new knowledge and skills together, they develop social cohesion, task cohesion, and collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is the belief that a group can meet challenges and complete tasks together successfully. Teams that have collective efficacy are better prepared to overcome adversity together.

- *Does your team routinely learn new collective knowledge and skills together on the job?*
- *How would you rate your team's collective efficacy? Can it improve?*
- *In your experience, how does training the team affect teamwork?*
- *Based on your experience, what are some other challenges and best practices for training the team?*

Reading:

[The Three Tips for Effective Team Training](#)
[How to Train Teams](#)
[5 Benefits of Team Training in the Workplace](#)

6. Manage expectations.

Plans often do not go as expected. Being mentally prepared for the unexpected enables proactive coping. Coping is what a person does to minimize stress. Managing expectations helps the team maintain a sense of control in the face of adversity. Managing expectations helps develop cohesion.

- *How often do plans not go as expected in your line of work?*
- *Does your team prepare for the unexpected?*
- *Have you worked for someone that failed to plan for the unexpected?*
- *In your experience, can teamwork suffer when plans go astray?*
- *Based on your experience, what are some other challenges and best practices for managing expectations?*

Reading:

[Managing Expectations is a Crucial Leadership Responsibility](#)

7. Talk about setbacks.

Talking about setbacks is an opportunity for teams to learn from their mistakes. Conducting an after-action review (AAR), especially when things don't go as planned, sets the stage for learning and growth. An after-action review (AAR) is a technique for improving execution by scrutinizing the outcomes of an action. Talking about setbacks helps develop cohesion.

- *Have you worked for someone that was reluctant to talk about setbacks? If so, why do you think they were reluctant?*
- *Have you worked for someone that was unwilling to admit their mistakes? How did that affect the team?*
- *In your experience, how does talking about setbacks affect teamwork?*
- *Based on your experience, what are some other challenges and best practices for talking about setbacks?*

Reading:

[Talking about Setbacks is an Opportunity for Growth and Team Building](#)
[How To Empower And Develop Your Team Using A Project Retrospective](#)

Facilitated discussion. Be prepared to discuss your experience with each of the leader tasks and concepts above. Facilitated discussion is the key to successful learning because it ensures you have a thorough understanding of applicable factual (what), conceptual (why), and procedural (how) knowledge relevant to each leader task.

Note about certification exams. Front-line supervisors that sit for the Resilience-Building Leadership Professional (RBLP) certification exam are assessed on the leader tasks covered in Modules 1-3 only. Middle managers that sit for the Resilience-Building Leadership Professional Coach (RBLP-C) certification exam are assessed on the leader tasks covered in Modules 1-5 only. Senior leaders that sit for the Resilience-Building Leadership Professional Trainer (RBLP-T) certification exam are assessed on the leader tasks covered in Modules 1-7.



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