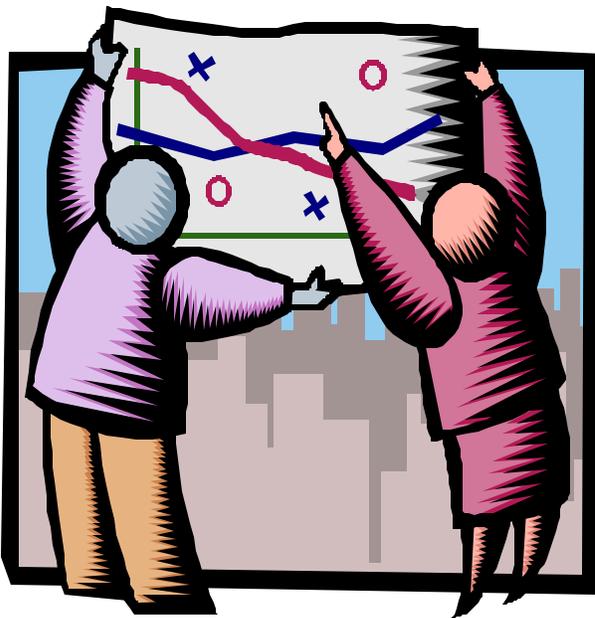


PROGRAM MONITORING AND SELF-ASSESSMENT: LEADING A PROGRAM MONITORING OR SELF- ASSESSMENT

7-C



Job Performance
Situation 7:
Improving
Program Quality
Through Program
Monitoring and
Self-Assessment

HEAD START
MOVING AHEAD
COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAM



Developed under delivery order number 105-97-2043, the Head Start Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Revised in 2000 by the American Institutes for Research under contract number 105-94-2020

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This material was produced in 1998, by Education Development Center, Inc., and Circle Solutions, Inc.

REFERENCE

This activity develops skill competencies in *leading a program monitoring or self-assessment*. Participants will increase skills in conducting a federal monitoring review or a local program self-assessment.

Participants will learn how to prepare for a review and how to build an effective monitoring or self-assessment team. They will learn how to demonstrate support for program staff being reviewed and how to support team members during different stages of team development.

Related skill activities include 3–D, Decision-Making: Building Consensus; 5–C, Conflict Resolution: Understanding the Elements; 7–D, Program Monitoring or Self-Assessment: Collecting Data Using Multiple Data Sources ; and 7–E, Planning: Using Assessment Data.

Sources. *Federal Leadership: Strengthening Head Start Through Review, Analysis and Technical Assistance*. 1994. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Hersey, P., and Blanchard, K. *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*, 4th ed. 1982. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Lacouisiere, R. B. *The Life Cycle of Groups: Group Developmental Stage Theory*. 1980. New York: Human Service Press.

OVERVIEW

Leading a Program Monitoring or Self-Assessment

Outcomes. Participants who complete this activity will be able to

- articulate a compelling vision for the program or self-assessment review to both review team members and grantee staff
- develop a plan for achieving their vision
- identify the characteristics of strong team members
- create a climate of respect during the assessment
- identify strategies that team leaders can use during different stages of team development
- use a formula for responding to staff complaints during a review

Materials. Newsprint and markers

Components

This activity can be done by one person, an informal group, or a formal workshop. We have provided suggested times, but participants and facilitators may wish to adjust these to their own timetables.

Step 1. Worksheet: Thinking About Federal Reviews and Self-Assessments	30 min.
Step 2. Background Reading: Getting Ready to Lead a Program Review or Self-Assessment	15 min.
Handout: The Pre-Review Data Scan	5 min.
Step 3. Worksheet: Getting Started	30 min.
Step 4. Background Reading: Handling the Human Elements	15 min.
Step 5. Worksheet: Strategies for Advancing Team Development	30 min.
Step 6. Summary	10 min.
Suggested total time	2 hrs. 15 min.

This activity contains 25 pages.

STEP 1. WORKSHEET: THINKING ABOUT FEDERAL REVIEWS AND SELF-ASSESSMENTS



Suggested time: 30 min.

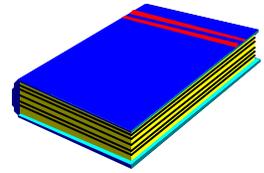
Purpose: To stimulate participant thinking about team-based assessments.

Part I (10 min.) Working individually, read the following statements and consider whether or not you agree with them. Write down your responses. Be sure to identify statements that you disagree with and your reasons for doing so.

1. The main purpose of conducting a federal review or a local self-assessment is to determine compliance with Head Start regulations.
2. The team leader has the responsibility for setting the tone during an assessment.
3. To remain objective, the wise review leader refrains from examining program data sources (e.g., PIR, grant application) before a review.
4. Parent participation can greatly strengthen a monitoring or self-assessment team.
5. Federal review teams have the authority to bring about program change.
6. One function of the team leader is to model appropriate ways to interact with grantee staff and other team members.
7. Involving team members in solving problems that arise lessens the leader's workload in the review process.
8. To set the right tone, team leaders should engage members in making all decisions about team process, from the first team meeting.

Part II (20 min.) Discuss your responses with another participant or with several participants in a small group.

STEP 2. BACKGROUND READING: GETTING READY TO LEAD A PROGRAM REVIEW OR SELF-ASSESSMENT



Suggested time: 15 min.

Any organization that wants to continue to provide high-quality products and services must conduct ongoing assessment and monitoring. Head Start is fortunate in that it has mechanisms for ensuring continuous improvement built into its culture and regulations. Local programs are required to establish ongoing internal systems to monitor their services. The formal mechanism of federal program review and the annual self-assessment conducted by grantees are two other ways that local programs identify the gaps between what they proposed to do and what they achieved. Through these processes a grantee identifies

- existing strengths
- areas in which services to children and families can be improved
- internal systems, staff, or elements in the environment that contribute to the program's strengths and areas for improvement
- untapped resources in the program itself or in its local environment
- compliance and noncompliance with both federal and other governing regulations *and* accomplishing the program's own goals and objectives

Most important, a successful Head Start federal program review or self-assessment provides a local program with the information it needs to continually improve its services to children and families.

The success of either a federal review or a local assessment depends on the work of a knowledgeable and committed team and a strong and effective leader.

I. THE LEADER¹

Providing a program with the information it needs requires that the reviewers collect accurate, relevant information and share the results in a respectful, sensitive way. The intensity of the process, as well as the inherently invasive nature of the review, can make the experience intimidating for both reviewers and those being reviewed. The leader plays an important role in making the process a productive, positive experience for all parties involved.

¹ Adapted from *Federal Leadership: Strengthening Head Start Review, Analysis and Technical Assistance*. 1992. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Articulate a Compelling Vision

The leader sets the tone for the entire self-assessment or monitoring experience by articulating a compelling vision that

- helps reviewers understand the purpose of the process and their role in it
- keeps the process on track
- serves as a touchstone when the leader or the team members encounter turbulence

Although each leader's vision will vary from one assessment to another, several common assumptions shape the leader's vision in both federal review and program self-assessments.

The Program Review or Self-Assessment Is a Means For Ensuring Quality Services To Children and Families. The effective leader recognizes that although the federal review and the self-assessment are required by Head Start regulations, the ultimate reason for conducting them is to ensure that a program provides quality services to children and families. When a leader fails to communicate this assumption, team members, especially in the case of the annual self-assessment, may not take the process seriously. They may tend to touch only the surface and not probe for accurate information.

The Program Review or Self-Assessment Is Part of an Ongoing Monitoring and Quality Improvement Cycle. The effective leader recognizes that the purpose of the self-assessment or federal review is to identify data and make recommendations that will help the program make improvements. When the leader fails to articulate this assumption, team members may go in one of two directions: they may select findings that paint a falsely positive view of the program and that overlook or minimize information that presents a more balanced picture; or they may see their role as that of fault-finders, portraying an overly negative view of the organization.

The Program Review or Self-Assessment Is a Collaborative Process. The effective leader recognizes the responsibility to help program staff accurately present their program in the best light by posing well-thought-out questions; carefully listening to and evaluating responses; and probing for additional information when necessary. When the leader fails to articulate this role, team members may fail to take full advantage of the information that they learn about through using a variety of data sources..

The Program Review or Self-Assessment Is an Objective Process. Leaders may enter the assessment process with preconceived notions about what they will find. While it is important that leaders prepare themselves and their teams by reviewing sources of program information

(see the discussion about strategy in the next section), they also need to foster a vision of objectivity. There is a critical difference between asking a team to explore questions that arise from your analysis of a piece of program information and signaling to the team that you believe that this is a strong program or a weak one. When leaders fail to be clear in this way, team members may tend to collect only information that confirms the leaders' preconceived ideas.

Leaders help the team buy into the vision by personally sharing the foregoing values with them at the beginning and throughout the process. They also set high expectations for team members, asking them to share the vision of high-quality services, continuous improvement, and objectivity.

Develop a Strategy for Achieving the Vision

A vision without a plan is only a dream. The effective leader carefully develops strategies to make the vision a reality. The planning process may be different for federal leaders and grantees leading a self-assessment. Federal leaders usually develop the plan on their own before the team assembles, while effective self-assessment leaders often involve a team in the planning process. Nevertheless, several planning steps are common to both.

Review Other Evaluative Information Ahead of Time (e.g., the latest PIR, the last self-assessment, the community assessment, and the grant application) to identify areas of particular focus. For example, if the grant application indicates that the program recently changed its organizational structure, the team may want to explore how the structure has affected systems for communication and human resources. For the annual self-assessment, the program's other managers and staff who are familiar with these information sources can be especially effective in assisting the team leader in identifying areas on which the assessment should focus.

Develop a Game Plan and Schedule for the Assessment. No assessment can thoroughly examine every aspect of program operation. It is the role of the leader to determine, in advance, those classrooms, centers, and children and families that will be included. In a federal review, the selection is guided by the PRISM monitoring instrument in partnership with the grantee director; in a self-assessment, the team leader and the assessment planning team determine how many sites to visit and which people to interview, records to review, and events to observe.

Oversee the Schedule. Successful programs build mechanisms for tracking program quality into their ongoing operations. However, both formal federal reviews and local self-assessments are conducted within a limited period of time. It is up to the team leader to oversee the schedule and ensure that all tasks are completed within the required time frame.

Develop Contingencies. It is the rare assessment that goes off without a hitch: reviewers get sick, weather emergencies occur, focus parents are unable to attend the Family Group Interview, and surprising preliminary findings indicate the need for follow-up in unexpected areas. The effective team leader is aware of the possibility of such events and develops contingencies.

Communicate the Vision and the Plan

Leaders communicate their vision and plan through internal meetings and subsequent interactions with the team and those being reviewed. In these interactions, team members and those being reviewed observe the leader to see if her behaviors match the verbal messages they are receiving. As a good role model, a team leader

- conveys her belief in the importance of the review process
- arrives at review appointments and team meetings on time and prepared
- takes time to establish rapport with the team and with those being assessed
- uses conflict-resolution skills to minimize any disputes between team members and program staff or other team members
- demonstrates respect for the program's employees and parents by listening respectfully to the information they share
- gives feedback in such a way that the receiver can hear it, choosing her words carefully
- establishes clear boundaries for team members
- maintains a professional relationship with team members and grantee staff

II. THE TEAM

One of the first things a team leader can do to ensure an effective federal review or grantee self-assessment is to select a culturally diverse team whose members hold a wide range of expertise. Federal team leaders usually draw from a pool of consultants who are experienced in reviews. Local-assessment team leaders involve managers and selected line staff, parents, and community leaders who are knowledgeable about the program.

Select Strong Team Members

In selecting team members, think about those who

- have working knowledge of Head Start Performance Standards.
- have an in-depth knowledge of at least one Head Start service area *and* understand how that service area interacts with larger Head Start systems.

- can be objective. Ask reviewer candidates about potential conflicts of interest, including professional or personal relationships they have with program staff that might cloud their objectivity.
- understand that the performance standards are broadly stated guidelines that allow for a wide range of delivery models. Reviewers whose judgment is limited by “how we do it in our program” often do a disservice to the review process.
- understand the context in which the particular Head Start program operates (e.g., inner-city or rural, center-based or home-based program).
- are willing and able to take direction from the team leader.
- have good decision-making and team process skills.
- have good recording, writing, questioning, and listening skills.

Focus on Building an Objective Team

Selecting an objective team can pose a challenge for leaders of self-assessment teams. While federal team leaders can draw on the knowledge of outside consultants, local team leaders often need program managers to evaluate their own services. Even if these managers are totally committed to producing objective findings, the models they carry in their heads about the services that they provide may prevent them from seeing those services in an objective light. Try some of the following strategies to address this challenge:

- Train interested parents to play a meaningful role in the assessment process. Parents can be particularly helpful in providing feedback on the responsiveness and sensitivity of program services and on recruitment, enrollment, and selection activities.
- Use individual and group interviews to gather information from parents and line staff. Many programs find that involving staff in group discussions provides a model that can be used for local self-assessments as well as federal program reviews.
- Invite local community leaders to serve on review assessment teams. For example, programs often invite early childhood specialists from a child-care program or the local public schools to assist in the review of classroom services. WIC, local mental health agencies, and other community groups can also provide excellent reviewers. Using local reviewers can serve as a good first step in building relationships with potential partner organizations.
- Assign service-area managers to review other service areas (e.g., the child development services manager can assess the program’s health services). This strategy not only provides a greater opportunity for objectivity but also helps managers to expand their knowledge and

appreciation of the services provided by other sectors of the organization.

Tips for New Federal Team Leaders

New team leaders are expected to conduct as effective a monitoring review as their more experienced colleagues. Before attempting a federal review as a solo team leader, consider shadowing an experienced review team leader or taking responsibility for co-leading part of a review under the direction of a skilled colleague. Here are some suggestions for new team leaders who are ready to lead a review on their own:

- Prepare, prepare, prepare. As a new team leader, you probably haven't accumulated the knowledge of regulations, performance standards, review protocols, and grantee history that your more experienced colleagues use to guide them through the review process. Ask a more experienced staff member to point out the information you will need to perform a credible review, and spend time reviewing it.
- Read and use the PRISM Federal Team Leader Planner. The Planner can help you understand the PRISM process, plan for a review, learn techniques for conducting effective team meetings, draft the PRISM report, and so forth. It also includes a comprehensive Pre-Review Checklist.
- Get as clear a picture as you can of the skill level of your team members before you begin the review. All consultants should understand the overall workings of the Head Start program, but most have expertise in particular disciplines. Ask your colleagues to suggest which consultants you should rely on for particular issues. Use those consultants as guides to the ways in which program practice reflects the regulations.
- Identify a contact back at the office who will be available to provide advice or to answer difficult questions if you run into a problem.
- Use conflict-resolution skills to settle issues with team members about the interpretation of regulations. Experienced team members sometimes challenge new team leaders on their knowledge of best practice and regulation. Skill in resolving a potential conflict can facilitate the process and avoid unnecessary collisions.
- Present a confident image: the team and the grantee are looking to you as the team leader.

HANDOUT: THE PRE-REVIEW DATA SCAN



Suggested time: 5 min.

A scan of a Head Start program's data sources can provide both federal team leaders and local self-assessment leaders with information that can shape their review. Reviewing the file history, for instance, can inform you about recent conversations or pending actions. Federal team leaders are encouraged to collect background information prior to the review. What follows are examples of questions that review leaders might use as they perform their pre-review data scan.

The Previous Self-Assessment Report

- What were the findings of the assessment team?
- What steps did the program include in the action plan to address these findings?
- What was the timeline for the action plan?
- How were parents involved in the self-assessment process?
- How were community members involved?

The Previous Federal Onsite Review

- What programmatic strengths did the review team identify?
- Did the review team identify any programmatic deficiencies? If so, what were they?
- What other areas of noncompliance did the team identify?
- What other significant comments or recommendations were included in the review report?

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) (For Programs with Deficiencies Only)

- What goals and objectives did the program include in its QIP?
- When did the QIP timeline expire?

Head Start Grant Application(s)

- What goals and objectives did the program include in its grant applications for the last three years?
- Has the program changed its service options (e.g., home-based, center-based) since the last review?
- Has the program undergone a major restructuring since the last review?

- Have there been major changes in key personnel?
- Has the program received special one-time grants for program improvements, facilities, or equipment purchases?
- Is the program an Early Head Start grantee?
- Is the program involved in child care partnerships?
- Does the program own its facilities?
- Has the program's level of nonfederal share changed significantly over the past three years?
- What other sources of funding does the program use to supplement Head Start services?

Community Assessment

- What major changes have occurred in the community in the last three years?
- Has welfare reform resulted in a need for full-day/full-year programs?
- Are centers located near the target population?
- What community agencies are current or potential Head Start partners?

The PIR

- Did all PIR elements (e.g., health statistics, average daily attendance figures) fall within acceptable limits?
- Has the program experienced a significant change in the number of volunteer hours in the past three years?
- Do all teachers meet the teacher qualification requirements?

STEP 3. WORKSHEET: GETTING STARTED



Suggested time: 30 min.

Purpose: To provide participants with an opportunity to apply concepts from the background reading.

Part I (15 min.) Working individually (on your own or as part of a large group), read each vignette and answer the questions that follow.

Federal Review (worksheet for both federal and grantee staff)

Ben is a new Head Start program specialist. Although he has participated in two other federal reviews, this is the first one that he will lead. In his other two reviews, he observed that the federal team leader used the first team meeting to provide team members with information about the grantee. Ben really wants the review to be successful.

After welcoming the team members, he shares a brief profile of the program and the community in which it operates. He concludes the profile by passing out the results of the program's recent self-assessment, which indicates that the program will take steps to improve systems for sharing information between service areas as well as its level of parental involvement. As he passes out the assessment results, Ben tells the team, "I'm not surprised that service integration and parent involvement are issues for New Granada. In fact, I'm surprised that they didn't indicate even more issues. They've hired a new director since the last program review. She really seems to be struggling under the weight of the job. We've had two calls from parents complaining about the director in the last three months. I'm eager to find out what's really happening here!"

1. What did Ben do that will help the review team members in their task?

2. What did Ben say that may hinder the team?

3. If you were Ben, what, if anything, would you have done or said differently?

Grantee Review (worksheet for both federal and grantee staff)

Maureen is a Head Start director in a large urban program. The program is known for providing quality innovative services; this year it entered into a collaborative relationship with a local child-care program. The program is scheduled to conduct a self-assessment in the next few months.

Maureen recognizes the importance of carefully assessing the services provided by her own team and by her partners. At a management team meeting, she raises the issues of the assessment with her staff. “In the past few years, I’ve been very pleased with our self-assessment process. We’ve done a good job of training parents, and the PRISM tool worked well for us. This year, though, I think we need to do something different. Maybe we should expand our assessment team beyond our own staff and parents.”

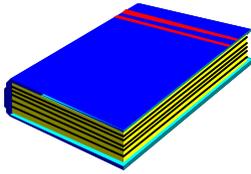
4. How would you advise Maureen?

5. Whom could she involve in the process?

6. Why?

7. What other suggestions would you make?

Part II (15 min.) Discuss your answers with another training participant.



STEP 4. BACKGROUND READING: HANDLING THE HUMAN ELEMENTS

Suggested time: 15 min.

Study the background reading below. Feel free to highlight segments or make notes in the margin.

I. SUPPORTING PROGRAM STAFF

A federal review or self-assessment can be a stressful experience for Head Start programs. Staff and parents alike have an emotional investment in their program: they have a strong interest in having other people view their program in a positive light. The inherent scrutiny of the process as well as uncertainty about the results can make some participants tense and anxious.

Unnecessary tension during the review process can negatively impact the review in a number of ways:

- Anxious staff may not provide accurate or complete answers to questions during individual or group interviews.
- Staff or parents observed in the course of their work may not perform up to their normal standards.
- Heightened tension may prompt disagreements among staff.

The wise team leader, sensing that staff performance may be unduly influenced by the increased scrutiny of the review, will try to determine if what the team is observing are typical program behaviors or the result of nervousness.

Tension can sometimes result if program staff and parents find certain behaviors of team leaders and review team members disrespectful or demeaning. In addition to jeopardizing the accuracy of data collected during the review, disrespectful or unsupportive behavior on the part of team members can damage the willingness of program staff and governing bodies to make necessary program change. This is especially true for federal reviews. Although federal team leaders have the power to cite a program as not meeting the performance standards and to make recommendations for program change, the real authority and responsibility for making the changes rest with the program's governing board, Policy Council, and staff. Many grantees have dismissed the validity of review

findings and declined to make the indicated program changes because the personal interactions in a review process were mishandled.

The assessment leader can create a climate of respect that will minimize review tensions and support the program staff and decision-makers in hearing and accepting review findings. The most important strategy is to provide direct and honest feedback to program decision-makers. Program leaders need clear information to make decisions about program change. Feedback that is vague will not provide the guidance the program needs. Here are some additional strategies:

- Minimize tension during interviews and focus groups by building rapport with participants before beginning data collection.
- Guard against facial expressions and body language that telegraph disapproval of program services or practices. Staff are often eager to pick up signals about the reviewers' perceptions. Reviewers who monitor their expressions and behaviors can help minimize tension and misleading rumors.
- Refrain from sharing findings, recommendations, and opinions with line staff or parents. The manner in which review information is shared with line staff and parents is up to the program's leaders. Respect their right to share information as they see fit by following communication protocols.
- Make sure that reviewers do not provide technical assistance or advice. Clarify reviewers' roles as program monitors and help them understand why it is inappropriate to provide recommendations to programs during a review.
- Avoid feedback language that is inflammatory or hurtful (see 1-E, Individual Development: Giving Feedback).

II. UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF YOUR TEAM

The team leader uses a combination of skills to guide his team successfully through the assessment process. Knowledge of team development theory and situational supervision can help.

Team Development Theory

Team development theory proposed by Lacouisiere² suggests that all teams proceed through a predictable series of developmental stages until they reach the high-performing stage. The time that each team spends in a particular stage varies from team to team. Because of the short duration of most assessment teams, many teams do not complete the journey. Each

² Lacouisiere, R. B., *The Life Cycle of Groups: Group Developmental Stage Theory*. 1980. New York: Human Service Press.

stage has its own set of unique, predictable characteristics, and each requires a different type of leadership.

Forming Stage. Team members get to know one another, their leader, and their role within the team. New members typically come to the team with high expectations for the experience. Because of their uncertainty about the situation, their communications are often at the polite, surface level. During this stage, team members look to the team leader for concrete direction. You can support team members' need for direction by confidently providing them with information such as

- your vision for the assessment
- the shape that you expect the assessment to take
- individual assignments and schedules
- specific expectations that you have for them (e.g., that you expect them to refrain from providing technical assistance as they conduct their interviews with staff)
- what you expect them to present at team meetings
- their role in reporting results to those being assessed

Storming Stage. The honeymoon is over. Team members now recognize that their fellow members, the team leader, and their role may not match their original, unrealistically high expectations. During this period, team members often express criticism of other members, the leader, or the process itself, either openly or to themselves. The storming stage is uncomfortable for all involved. The team leader who finds herself with a storming team needs to use two different approaches. First, continue to provide clear direction and information; often the team members storm when they feel uncertain about their role or the roles of others. Second, provide reassurance and encouragement. It helps to thank the team members for their contributions and to assure them of the vital role they play in the process. It is also useful to engage storming team members in resolving the issues with which they are concerned.

Norming Stage. With skillful leadership, the team progresses to this stage, in which team members come to terms with each other and the work that they need to do together. Because team members are eager to move out of the storming stage, they may be willing to look for compromise or collaborative solutions to the problems that they stormed about. For example, the team that stormed because one member monopolized the review team meeting may develop time limits for reporting or similar strategies for meeting management. The team leader can help the norming process along by helping the team clarify its expectations.

Performing Stage. Once the team has developed and agreed upon group norms, it has reached the performing stage. Now team members understand their assignments and know how to carry them out. The leader's role at this stage is to monitor the progress of the team members

and provide them with support as needed. Continuing to provide the type of intense instruction used in the forming stages may create resentment among team members who are already functioning effectively.

The foregoing brief summary of team development stages and situational supervision may seem deceptively simple. In reality, the team leader needs a set of complex skills to effectively lead the team through the four stages.

- To provide the direction needed in the forming and storming stages, the team leader needs good communication skills (see 3–E, Communication: Effective Spoken Communication).
- To discover the underlying causes of the storming stage, the team leader needs well-developed listening skills and conflict-resolution skills (see 3–F, Communication: Active Listening Skills, and 5–C, Conflict Resolution: Understanding the Elements).
- To help the team to identify its issues, the team leader needs to give honest and accurate feedback (see 1–E, Individual Development: Giving Feedback).
- To help the group develop norms, team leaders need facilitation skills (see 3–C, Facilitation: Fundamentals of Leading Meetings).

The *Moving Ahead* package provides skill-building activities for each of these skills.

III. ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE TEAM

Occasionally, even when the team leader has adequately prepared the federal or self-assessment team, program staff will have complaints about behaviors of team members. It is important to treat any complaint seriously, but refrain from passing judgment until you can find out more information. Although you need to quickly address the real (or imagined) issue of the staff, you also need to recognize that the team atmosphere that you tried hard to build can quickly disintegrate if members are not feeling trusted and supported. Leaders need to balance the needs of the grantee staff and their team members. Consider these strategies:

- Listen carefully to the concern and get to the real issue.
- Thank the staff member for sharing the complaint and promise to explore further.
- Check with the team member about the interaction that prompted the complaint to demonstrate trust in the member's judgment and abilities. Usually the team member will remember the incident in question and can provide you with some insight into exactly what happened.

- Explore with the team member whether more information needs to be gathered about the complaint. If not, is an explanation or apology warranted? Who should deliver it? Who should receive it?
- Discuss ways to avoid future issues with the team member involved.
- If the situation warrants (e.g., program parents or staff shared the incident as an example of a wider problem), discuss the incident with the entire review team, being careful to guard the anonymity of the team member involved.
- Decide whether to bring it up with program management. If you decide you have a consultant with poor skills, take the necessary action to curb the use of the consultant in the future. Be prepared to document poor performance.
- Close the loop with the person who originally shared the complaint (or with the Head Start director, if the complaint came from a parent or community leader you won't meet directly again during the review) by describing what you've discovered and the action you took.

STEP 5. WORKSHEET: STRATEGIES FOR ADVANCING TEAM DEVELOPMENT



Suggested time: 30 min.

Purpose: To give participants a chance to apply the skills they have learned about nurturing team development.

Part I (15 min.) Study the following vignettes. Determine the stage of team development (forming, storming, norming, or performing) for each team. Suggest strategies that the team leader can use to advance the team’s development.

1. Kristin is a new federal team leader. Her mentor at the regional office helped her put together a team of experienced reviewers to help ensure that her first solo review experience would be a good one. Kristin has taken a special liking to Hannah, one of the reviewers who is a retired program specialist from another region. She uses her as a sounding board and asks her advice on different aspects of the review. (Their conversations haven’t gone unnoticed by the other members of the team.) Kristin was pleased with the review’s progress until the group tried to reach consensus on an area of concern at the Wednesday night team meeting. “I can’t believe you just said that, Hannah,” Don said sharply. “The rest of us have been talking, and while your ideas might have worked a few years ago, things have changed with the revised performance standards. You better get with it!” Kristin doesn’t know how to respond.

How would you describe the team’s developmental stage?

What can Kristin do to resolve the situation?

2. Claire has been a family service manager in a large Head Start program for several years. She readily agreed when her director asked her to lead the program’s self-assessment process this year. She has participated as a federal reviewer in the past and attended her region’s reviewers’ training a few months ago. She has several ideas on ways to make the process a meaningful experience, including inviting

several of her contacts in community agencies to join the process. She invited a core group of staff and parents to help her plan the self-assessment. To open the planning meeting, Claire told the team how excited she was about the self-assessment and how pleased she was that they would be joining her. Because she wanted the team to feel ownership for the plan, she decided not to share most of her ideas right away. Instead, she opened the discussion by saying, "I'd like to start the planning process by hearing some of your ideas." She was disappointed when the team members had little to contribute. "I don't get it," she later told her director. "They all said that they were interested in being involved, but they didn't seem to have much to suggest."

How would you describe the team's developmental stage?

What can Claire do to resolve the situation?

3. It's been a long week. Bill is an experienced team leader, but he hasn't managed such a challenging review team for a long time. He's worked with most of the review team members before and respects their judgment. Two of the reviewers can be a little long-winded at times, but Bill has always been able to keep the team meetings to a reasonable length. This review, however, is different. Pete, one of the new members of the team, challenges or has a comment about everything that other team members say. The meetings are long, and most of the team members have had enough of Pete. After the Tuesday night meeting, Bill asked Pete to shorten his comments. On Wednesday evening Pete started to limit his comments, but after a while he was back to monopolizing the discussion. "It's getting late and we still have a lot of ground to cover," Bill tells the group. "Let's spend some time talking about how we can accomplish the rest of our work in a reasonable amount of time." Most of the team members nod their heads in agreement.

How would you describe the team's developmental stage?

What can Bill do to resolve the situation?

Part II (15 min.) Share your ideas with other members of the group.
Agree as a group on a recommendation for the team leader.



STEP 6. SUMMARY

Suggested time: 10 min.

Key Points

- The importance of the leader's vision
- The leader's role in preparation
- Characteristics of strong review team members
- Ways to support program staff
- Developmental stages of teams
- How to handle program complaints about assessment teams

Personal Review

What did you learn from this activity?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

How will you use your new knowledge and skills in your work?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What else do you think you might need to learn in order to master the skill of leading a program monitoring or self-assessment?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

