

# TODD: Who is Best to Lead the Team?

## TRANSCRIPT

Hello, today is Todd is on who is best to lead our team, who serves as the chair of the team, is another frequent question that we got and felt like having a Todd specifically dedicated to this would be useful for individuals moving forward. As we think about team leadership, there's a couple of, again, straightforward bits of advice that we would share. The first is it's nice to have a single team leader and understand there's going to always be exceptions to the rule. But to have one team chair allows for, I think, a clarity in terms of decision making and the ability to move forward more effectively for teams that want to split that chair position and have a second chair, if you will. Some of the advice that we would share would be the importance of looking at having clearly identified roles for each of those two individuals, one being maybe more of the leader position and working with upper administration or leadership within the company, whereas the other might be more of a manager position keeping up with the day to day record management and larger issues of the day to day functioning of the team, taking in reports, creating assessments and developing intervention plans. The danger really of having to team chairs or co leadership is found in the those the blank space between the overlap. So what we don't want to have is one team

chair saying, well, I thought they were doing it. And the other team chairs say, well, I thought they were going to do it and there be things not getting done. So the communication piece can be really critical there in terms of a shared team chair position. But again, our preference would be to add one single chair who's able to move forward, who can provide guidance to the team, address conflict that might exist. And in the event that there's a debate about how to move forward with a particular case, they sit in that judgment seat, being able to kind of split that decision and decide how to move forward with particular actions and consultation or advice.



I should also clarify here, we'll talk about team meetings and agendas and another Todd. But one of the things I want to stress here is that we don't want to have people voting on the meeting. The team chair is not like a survivor where people are making decisions or the Supreme Court five for a split decision. So we want to make sure that the team chair is really sitting in a position of working with the team, keeping people focused and moving forward. Another last point I'll make before we advance the slide is this idea of making sure that that team chair doesn't rotate. And sometimes you have historical committees where the idea of leadership is shared and we rotate the team leadership or the committee chair. This does not work well for a care team. And I'll tell you why. Part of building a good team is getting to know the team members to understanding the processes moving forward. Many of us do this as a second or third hat or job at our place of business, on our campus, at our school. So the idea of rotating a new person in and expecting them to learn this entire new process, all of the team members, is just not realistic. So we're not going to be as efficient when we do that, when we're switching off frequently. Now, if there's an existing team member and the switch off might be someone is on the existing team who has a nice history and understanding of the team, then maybe there's some room for consideration for that moving forward. Most commonly, what we're going to see really across the board is this idea of a dean of students or VP, vice president of student affairs, sitting in leadership in the K through 12 space. And these, you know, the primary and secondary schools we're going to see more commonly a principal, an assistant principal, maybe even a superintendent. In some of those spaces. We see this shifting in other locations. We often see councilors being asked to step out, folks from the conduct space. Maybe the case managers think we're seeing a growth in that area as well. The main issue with other people, really with anyone who's leading the chair, to be frank, is going to be the dual relationship piece. So if you're a licensed counselor or a psychologist or a medical professional, you really do have to understand

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that your essentially limitations around sharing information, confidentiality, all of these things are related a bit more towards your work in your center, not so much what should be the governing standard for the team itself. And we've seen some big problems with that in the past, where we have a doctor or psychiatrist or psychologist or counselor running the team and they run it almost like their center and. Understanding that typically is the governing standard for educational teams, making sure that you understand that.

When you think about the leader themselves, I think there's some good qualities that we want to stress moving forward, the first category I'd suggest is having that respect for the team and that respect goes both ways, that they're both respected by the team and they have respect for members. There's this willingness to work through these issues, build consensus and essentially have some of those leadership characteristics that we see are really useful, really in any type of leadership role, whether it's a coach or dean of students or an executive or a CEO, someone who's willing to listen, make decisions, move forward in a clear, consistent and efficient manner. I think having a dedication to being timely and organized



and we talk to other TODD's about the importance of not canceling meetings, of being consistent with meetings, being consistent with documentation in many ways that Buck stops at the team chair's desk. So if there's things going on on a team that aren't functioning well, I do believe it's the team's chair has the responsibility to address these and move forward. The other piece with a team chair, I think, in leadership on the team is the idea of looking at the long-range movement from the team. And I think when we're meeting as a team or even as a threat team, one of the things that we see is this idea of focusing on the problems and the

crises at hand and perhaps not thinking about the long-term maintenance of the team. The parallel here is driving a car. You're just getting from work back and forth. Are you always attending to things like getting the oil changed to the tires rotated or whatever other maintenance is done to a car? So those are some of the issues that we want to make sure that we're thinking about those long-term maintenance issues for the team. And it's really solely the responsibility of leadership, things like making sure you have a training schedule, having a plan to do quality assurance with your documentation. These are things that the team chair should be thinking about now. Like any good leadership position, that doesn't mean that they're responsible for doing all of these. That's that wonderful word delegation. But the idea team chair is setting up a process and making sure things are taken care of, I think is really critical. They're having some buy in from upper leadership and support from them, whether it's financial or related to the scope of the team, the things that the team can do and how they're heard and respected. That campus is another piece of what the team chair tries to build, addressing larger, often unseen issues in terms of assessments, making sure that the marginalized populations that you might be working with are treated fairly, that we're really trying to mitigate explicit and implicit bias, that we're trying to reduce things so that they don't affect our decision making moving forward. We're never going to completely remove bias. It is what it is. It's part of how we see the world. What we can do is mitigate it by becoming aware about it and then trying to develop some proficiency and often cultural competencies that we need to really look at differently.

And finally, I might argue for a sense of humility as the team chair. I'm very much a fan of the idea of certain leadership, of being willing to kind of roll up your sleeves, help out, but remembering always about how difficult this can be for the team members and supporting them throughout that a kind word as a really long way to create quote here from a friend of mine, Dr. Poppy Fitch. And I'll read it for you here.

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If you're listening to this, it says, a good team leader is inclusive, caring and connected. And I think that's such a succinct way of putting it. They are strong team leaders. They understand the relationship between themselves, their team, the team members, and the success of the team. They self-reflect and encourage others to do so as well. So I think that's a very straightforward paragraph, really cuts to the chase in terms of what we're looking for. They're inclusive, caring and connected. And if we had to come up with three words, I like those three words very much.

To sum up, our little practical takeaways here at the end, having one team leader I think is useful in having

a team leader, holding regular meetings, building these connections with others around campus and thinking, if you will, about the commonalities and the differences, the weaknesses, the strengths of the team really doing almost again, back to the car analogy, doing that kind of check under the hood. How is the team function? What are both short term and long-term goals to address these issues? Finally, I think a team leader has a sense of equanimity, a balance in the face of crisis, not that they're perfect right now that the. Unfeeling, but they're able to handle a crisis with some grace moving forward. Thanks for taking some time. With us on today is Todd.

