

VOLUNTEERS

Team Culture

What is it ?

Team culture is the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours shared by a team. It's how people work together towards a common goal and how they treat each other. It can be summarised: “This is who we are” and “This is what we do”

Why is it important?

Team culture exists whether we are intentional about it or not. The difference is that if we are intentional we will eventually get the positive culture we want, if not—there will be a culture—maybe good or OK, but probably not.

Team culture will affect recruiting, investing in or training, and retaining volunteers.

Understanding who you are as a team, how you work together, how you behave, and your values and vision are all important as you invite people to work together. Your team culture will guide you as you invest in people and ultimately it will be what makes them want to stay serving with you.

Elements for a great team culture:

Know your people



Relationship building in teams is often neglected – we are busy doing what we need to do to make the program happen and neglect to invest time into people.

There is a saying – When someone knows your name, you feel important, when someone knows your story, you feel loved. Do you know your people’s stories – does the team know each other’s stories? This connectedness is so important in building a sense of team, of togetherness. Encourage leaders to hang out together outside of Sunday, know important dates of your team members – birthdays, anniversaries, significant events, take time to really know your people.

Everyone has a Voice



Allow space for people to express opinions, to bring ideas, and where appropriate implement those ideas. Create a culture where it is Ok to respectfully disagree. This requires a degree of humility as a leader.

Create a culture where the team is solution oriented – yes, its ok to disagree or to raise a concern – what are we going to do about it – what’s your idea for a solution to the problem?

It is ok to disagree, but work through the issue until a consensus is agreed so that publicly the team is united – everyone needs to be able to wave the banner for the team – don’t allow a dissenter to bad mouth the team or the ministry.

Communication



Communication is two way – it involves listening as well as talking or giving information. Listen to your volunteers – are they happy in their role? Are they feeling overloaded? Take time to notice.

There are a lot of practical things we need to communicate – rosters, curriculum, expectations and policies but also think about vision and stories and feedback.

Communicate your vision widely and often. We all need to be regularly reminded of what it is we are here for – why are we doing what we are doing. It creates unity and common purpose.

Share stories – particularly where parents have told you something. People love to hear feedback and good stories even if it doesn't directly relate to them. They want to know that what they are doing is having an impact.

Make your feedback specific and honest. Be attentive to what is going on so you notice things. Be aware that young people especially are used to immediate feedback. What we recognise and reward gets remembered.

Support and Systems



People need to know they have your support – in the practical things with good resources and good systems and processes so everyone knows what we are doing, and how things work.

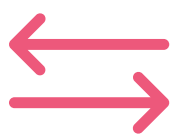
They need to know they will be backed up in any disputes or difficulties. They need to know that you will help them learn to do things they don't know how to do – and you will never drop them in the deep end and leave them to sink or swim.

Fun



It's always easier to serve if you are having fun. Enjoy each other, laugh together.

Flexibility



We all know that things don't always go as planned and a good team culture will be Ok with that and be OK to go with the flow without stress and complaints

Trust



This is essential for a positive team culture. You need to be able to trust your team and they need to be able to trust you.

A good thing to remember here is to praise in public and process in private. If you have problems with someone – process that with them in private. If you have praise – do it publicly. Remember – what we recognise and reward gets repeated.



Culture is what we say and what we allow. Culture can be easily damaged by careless words and actions but also by inaction – especially where our words and actions don't line up.

