

WORKING THROUGH TEAM CHALLENGES

Challenges within teams require students to apply their learning and make every reasonable effort to resolve issues as a team. Resolution of challenges can support you to achieve your desired learning goals, live in alignment with your values, and keep your team functioning effectively.

Here are some examples of challenges and the steps to resolve them. Support from your Team Coach, your Instructor(s) and the Program Office at any stage is available upon request.

EXAMPLES OF OUTCOME OBSTACLES:

- *Lack of clarity on assignment requirements and expectations*
- *Lack of clarity on course material*
- *Inability to access, interpret or analyze information (e.g. technical constraint)*

EXAMPLES OF TASK PROCESS OBSTACLES:

- *Unclear workplan and/or scheduling challenges*
- *Unclear decision-making processes*
- *Unproductive meetings*
- *Undefined roles and responsibilities*
- *Unclear process of contribution, integration of contributions, or editing*

EXAMPLES OF RELATIONSHIP OBSTACLES:

- *Differing learning, working and communication styles*
- *Differing performance expectations*
- *Unwillingness to take responsibility for action/inaction*
- *Power struggles*
- *Miscommunication, unwillingness to communicate or lack of engagement/avoidance*
- *Strong emotional reaction that is unaddressed/unresolved*

Learning to **negotiate** effectively is a key to team success. For strategies on how to address obstacles as a team, refer to [What is Your Obstacle?](#)

Issues that require immediate attention of the Instructor and Program Office:

- Evidence of plagiarism or cheating: [Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#)
- Evidence of unsafe or threatening language or behaviour: Refer to Royal Roads [Student Conduct Process](#), [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#), and [Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy](#).
- Personal or confidential issues that may impact ability to participate effectively in the program (e.g., physical or mental illness, change in financial status, family emergencies, work circumstances, etc.). Refer to Royal Roads [Counselling Services](#) and [Accessibility Services](#).

Working Through Team Challenges: Steps 1 and 2 The Informal Process

Step 1: WORK TO RESOLVE THE CHALLENGE WITHIN THE TEAM

Teams are encouraged to follow these steps to positively and proactively resolve the challenge.

1. Schedule a mutually agreeable time and place to discuss the challenge directly. Consider starting with a one-on-one conversation respectfully stating your concerns and asking questions to gain perspective on the situation.
2. Contact your instructor to clarify assignment requirements as necessary.
3. Invite all team members to identify the specific challenge and its impact on the team. Review your Team Agreement together and **document** the outcomes of your discussion.
4. Update your Team Agreement, as necessary, based on your discussion.
5. As a team, brainstorm options and **document strategies that you will use** for addressing the challenge. Apply team communication tools, **negotiation skills** and conflict resolution strategies that you created in your Team Agreement.
6. As a team, develop an agreed-upon **description** and **timeline** of what needs to happen to satisfy the expectations of all team members.
7. **Document this process as a team and ensure all members receive a copy.**

Step 2 for ONGOING, UNRESOLVED, URGENT AND ESCALATING CONCERNS: Request support from your Team Coach

If your team has not been able to resolve the challenge, or the issue is more **urgent** in nature, [contact the Team Coach](#). You will be asked to provide documentation of your challenge.

The Team Coach will use the restorative justice perspective to resolve challenges including taking any or all of the following measures:

- Provide guidance to support an effective process for resolution.
- Coach individuals who are encountering difficulties, referring to additional RRU support services if needed;
- Engage with an individual or team to facilitate discussions about specific concerns;
- Meet with the team to develop clear action steps and timelines;
- Involve the Instructor or Program Head where necessary.

Ongoing and Escalating Issues:

In the event this restorative work is unsuccessful, then the Team Coach will guide your team through the formal process, Step 3 & 4, described below. All team members should be aware of the escalation and teams, as a whole, are to gather **a record of their work, including agreements, planning, communication, and meetings**. Team Coaches make every effort to maintain transparency and openly discuss this process with all members of the team, while respecting dignity and privacy.

Working Through Team Challenges: Steps 3 and 4 The Formal Process

Step 3: NOTE OF CONCERN

After Steps 1 and 2, if a team member(s) is still not meeting performance expectations, the team can then proceed with drafting a **Note of Concern**.

1. The **Note of Concern** should be written by the team, addressed to the teammate, and include the following:
 - a) The specific ongoing challenge the team is facing.
 - b) Steps taken to attempt to resolve the challenge up to this point, including providing the documentation from step 1 & 2.
 - c) A description of the expectations the team member must meet to satisfy the team.
 - d) A timeframe for meeting the expectations.

2. The **Note of Concern** must be sent to all team members via RRU email and cc'd to the Team Coach and the Program Office.

3. Once a **Note of Concern** is sent:
 - a. The Team Coach will discuss the Note with the recipient and the team members and ensure that conflict resolution and communication is being used appropriately. Depending on the nature of the concern, the Team Coach may ask to meet with the team together or individually. The Program Head or Instructor may participate depending on the team challenge.

 - b. The team member who receives a Note of Concern may be required to write a **Letter of Commitment** to the team, cc'd to your Team Coach and Program Head, outlining how they will address the Note. This letter may be drafted with support of the Team Coach.

4. If a recipient of a **Note of Concern** does not correct the problem within the agreed upon time frame or fails to meet the commitments outlined in a **Letter of Commitment**, and documentation has been provided to demonstrate this, the Program Head and Instructor may take further academic measures. The Team Coach may be asked to provide supporting documentation and facilitate communications between the team, Instructor, and/or Program Head.

In exceptional circumstances a **Note of Concern** may not be the appropriate next step and there may be a need to go directly to the **Letter of Expectation** process. That decision will be determined by the Team Coach, Instructor, and the Program Head.

Step 4: LETTER OF EXPECTATION

In the event the team issue(s) are not resolved through the above procedures the Program Head may decide to issue a formal **Letter of Expectation** to the underperforming team mate.

1. The **Letter of Expectation** is issued by the Program Head.
2. It summarizes the main issues or behaviours, lays out the expectations moving forward, and sets a timeline for meeting those expectations.
3. The Team Coach, Instructors, Program Office, and team may be part of the process, and the Team Coach may guide the development of a **Letter of Expectation** with the Program Head.
4. Failure to comply with the **Letter of Expectation** can result in academic evaluation as determined by the Instructor and Program Head. Outcomes may range from mandated apology to a requirement to withdraw from the program.

Timelines, Communication, and Privacy

Staff, faculty, and coaches take team challenges very seriously and endeavor to resolve them in a timely manner. Nevertheless, all team challenges take time to communicate, document, and resolve. Out of respect for everyone's privacy and dignity, not every action or step in this process will be communicated back to your team.

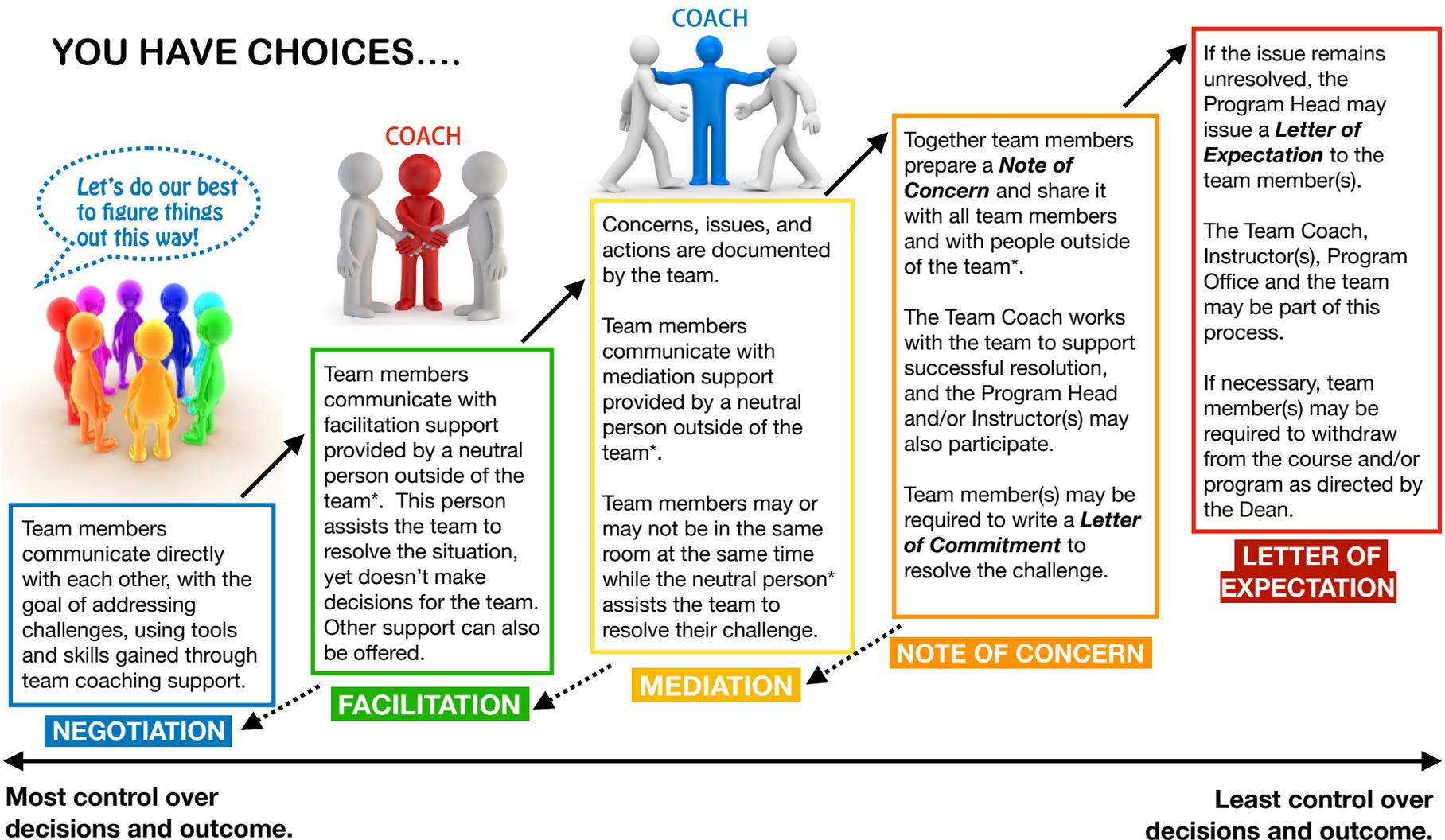
For more information, contact your Team Coach, or use the general email box:

teamcoaching@royalroads.ca

TEAM CHALLENGES - HOW WILL YOU OVERCOME YOUR OBSTACLE?

(a team disagreement or other challenge)

YOU HAVE CHOICES....



* Involves the Team Coach and may also involve the Instructor, Program Office, and/or Program Head. Details of these processes can be found in RRU's document: "Working Through Team Challenges".