

# Team Development



## **Helping the Ministry Team work well**

We learn from experience every week as teams around the Diocese. We know already that our teams should

- develop a written list of "team norms" which spell out what members can expect of each other and the whole team.
- spend substantial time in prayer and fellowship
- meet fortnightly for at least 1 ½ hours
- make an action list at each meeting recoding the work people have agreed to do.

This isn't a great surprise. In the 1960s, Bruce Tuckman identified the major stages for teams working together. He began with four – Forming – Storming – Norming – Performing. He later added a fifth – transforming which recognized the changing nature of teams. It takes very significant skills to participate in a team for lengthy periods.

### ***Forming***

Every time a new person is added to the team or a person leaves the team, the team must form or reform. As the team comes together people learn about each other and welcome each other into the shared endeavour of leading the people of God. The team must spend careful time listening to each other, recognizing strengths and weaknesses in each other and learning to trust each other.

### ***Storming***

The team exists for the purpose of leading the community of faith. Every member of the team will come with their ideas and enthusiasm. In the beginning, team members may seek to get their way or give up on idea for the sake of peace. The complex task for a team is to learn to explore ideas in a collaborative way so that well thought through strategies are developed together with a clear framework for taking action. In this stage, people need to learn listen well and be appropriately assertive. For many Parish Priests, this is one of the most demanding times. They must facilitate the conversations well at the same time as coming to terms with the significant changes in their own ministry.

### ***Norming***

There is clear evidence that teams work. While it might take time, most teams will develop a common purpose and ways of working well together. Some teams will have set up a formal charter outlining what can be done at meetings. In other teams this may be more organic. In this stage, a team will have discovered how to listen and learn from each other valuing the unique contributions different members bring.

### ***Performing***

Excellence in MCiM doesn't come from each individual being a star but from the evident interdependence of the team generating creative ministry. Great teams are known for their knowledge, competence and motivation. They like being with each other, praying with each other, and working with each other.

### ***Transforming***

Teams change and begin the process again. Transforming teams know how to celebrate endings and beginnings.

### **Teams need to learn about conflict and communication**

It is inevitable that a community in change will experience a range of emotions about that change. These emotions will be present in the whole congregation and will be evident within the team.

We can struggle with conflict in Christian communities sometimes regarding unease and robust discussion as signs of disunity when they are in fact essential for the community to grow to deeper maturity in faith and work.

The Ministry Team needs to learn about their each member's personality and conflict styles. They also need to consider carefully the learning style of each member. Each of us has learning preferences which shape how we acquire knowledge and process information. Different communication strategies are needed for different people. The spoken word is sufficient for some people while others need images to help them receive what is being presented to them.

While the Ministry Team is doing this work with each other they can ponder how different members of the parish handle disputes or communicate with each other.