

Team Types Activity

Goals:

- Give participants' an opportunity for self-reflection on behavior and type;
- Help participants work together as a team through understanding each other more deeply;
- Give participants another "lens" for looking and working with each other.

Time: 40-60 minutes.

How it's done

Team types is a straightforward tool for participants to learn about themselves through identifying themselves within four different categories. These four types each represent different aspects of how people may operate in group settings.

The basic four categories have emerged out of many different cultures. Models like it show up in many indigenous traditions (Celtic Wheel of Being, Native American Medicine Wheel, etc.), modern science's analysis of the human brain, and team theory. For sake of maximum cultural accessibility, we call it "Team Types" – though we want to recognise its many roots.

The four different types are designated by the four directions (and in most indigenous traditions have some associated items or animals; below includes the Lakota Medicine Wheel's and the Celtic Wheel of Being's objects/animals):

East (*eagle, visionary/explorer, yellow, spring, creative, inventive, has fire of inspiration*)

- Sees the big picture
- Very idea-oriented, focus on future thought
- Insight into mission and purpose
- Likes to experiment, explore
- Can lose focus on tasks and not follow through
- May become easily overwhelmed, lose track of time
- Tends to be highly enthusiastic early on, then burn out

South (*mouse, producer, green, summer, hearthfire, fertility, bringing together*)

- Allows others to feel important in determining direction of what's happening
- Value-driven regarding all aspects of personal/professional life
- Uses relationships to accomplish tasks
- Innocence and trust in others based on vulnerability and openness
- Supportive, nurturing, feeling-based
- Has trouble saying "no" to requests
- Internalises difficulty and assumes blame
- Prone to disappointment when relationship is seen as secondary to task
- Difficulty confronting, dealing with anger

West (*bear, judge, brown, autumn, learning, judgement, information*)

- Weighs all sides of issues
- Uses data analysis and logic
- Seen as practical and thorough in task situations
- Introspective, self-analytical
- Can become stubborn and entrenched in position
- Can be indecisive, collect unnecessary data, mired in details
- May appear cold, withdrawn

North (*buffalo, white, winter, warrior, open to struggle, decisive*)

- Assertive, active, decisive
- Likes to be in control of relationship and steer course of events
- Quick to act, expresses sense of urgency for others to act now
- Enjoys challenge of difficult situations and people
- Can get defensive quickly, argue, try to out-expert you
- Can lose patience, pushes for decision before it's time
- May get autocratic, want things their way, ride roughshod over people

So to run Team Types:

1. *Set-up:* Explain that this exercise is about learning about one's self and tendencies people have in working in teams. It is a chance to self-identify and to learn about how other people operate.
2. *Newsprint:* Describe the four team types, asking people to pay close attention to try to figure out which of the directions might describe some aspect of them.
3. *Affinity groups:* People form groups based on the directions, and talk among themselves on what it is like to be "north" or "west." Create sub-groups for conversation purposes if needed. Ask people who are uncertain of which group to come into the center. Talk with those individuals about their situation; suggest they "hang out" in the various groups to see if any strikes a spark or they can eliminate one or more; affirm them if they seem adamant about not joining a group.
4. *Dialogue among groups:*
 - a. Each group reports how they experience being their direction. Take these "reports" through a couple of sample sharings.
 - b. Ask groups "What is a strength this side brings to the task of strategising?" Have them discuss as a group and then share to each other.
 - c. Ask groups "What irritates this direction about how other groups do strategy?" Again, discuss as a group and then share to each other. Come on, be honest." Keep this light, laugh and enjoy what they say, be delighted with the things that drive them crazy.
5. *Clarify:* (use newsprint to anchor for visual learners)
 - a. Need all four directions for successful community, best teamwork, etc.
 - b. The usual points of tension (polar opposites).
6. *Negotiation time:* ask participants to get with someone from a different direction and work with them on "How can we work together in a way that affirms our differences in direction and at the same time enables us to collaborate?"

Where tool comes from:

This particular design is created by George Lakey. With thanks to David Baum and Morgan Henderson.

For more information on the different cultures that have roots in Team Types see: Angeles Arrien's *The Four-Fold Way: Walking the Path of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary* (Harper Collins).

For notes on some racial/ethnic politics of using the tool, contact Training for Change for an article on "Celtic Wheel Political Background."