

## Toxic to Healthy

---



This session is organized in the following way:



- Identify what Toxic is
- Explore effective strategies to address it
- Consider ways to avoid the reoccurrence of toxicity on healthy teams

---

### Mind Map, “Toxic”

Participants were instructed to take a moment to think about a season in their life when they were required to work on a “toxic” team or with an individual that they would describe as toxic.

We then recorded words that came to mind when participants thought about the term: TOXIC

Here’s what they came up with:



---

## Definition of Toxic

We used this quote from Robert Bacal to define the term “toxic.”

“We can think of organizations as falling on a continuum. One end is anchored by organizations that function well. In the middle we find the average organization that is effective but could be better. Finally, we have **the toxic organization, an organization that is largely ineffective, but is also destructive to its employees and leaders.**”

Bacal, Robert (2000) Toxic Organizations - Welcome To The Fire Of An Unhealthy Workplace


---

## Matthew 23

Considering this definition of “toxic,” we studied Mathew 23 together to identify examples of toxicity there.

**In Groups:**

- Read Matthew 23:1-36
- Identify what examples of “toxicity”

LEADING TOXIC TEAMS TO BECOMING HEALTHY TEAMS 

### Here’s what was discovered:


- Don’t practice what you preach
  - Seek own glory
  - Lazy
  - Hypocrisy (Pretend)
  - Legalism
  - Religiosity
  - Seeking titles/position
  - Finger-pointing
  - Judgmental
  - Close-minded
  - Exclusionary
  - Not vulnerable or self-aware
  - Claiming Authority but not responsibility
  - Can’t take correction
- 

### Responses of Toxic People

Sometimes what prevents us from addressing the toxicity on our teams is the lack of confidence we have for positive outcomes. The unwillingness to embrace critical input is a character trait of toxic people.

**Confronting Toxic People**

Defer	<i>“I’ll look into that when...”</i>
Downplay	<i>“I think that’s pretty normal...”</i>
Deny	<i>“You’re misunderstanding. It is...”</i>
Distract	<i>“Have you looked over there...”</i>
Discredit	<i>“Well you know them. They are...”</i>
Destroy	<i>(Boy, I’m gonna make them pay)</i>

LEADING TOXIC TEAMS TO BECOMING HEALTHY TEAMS 

Instead, toxic people normally respond in one of these ways when they are confronted.


They Defer, Downplay, Deny, Distract, Discredit, and Destroy.

---

## Helpful Strategies

**In Groups:**  
Identify strategies (*words, attitudes, and actions*) to overcome these practices of resistance.

Defer	Distract
Downplay	Discredit
Deny	Destroy

LEADING TOXIC TEAMS TO BECOMING HEALTHY TEAMS 

The group recorded these words, attitudes, and actions that can overcome these resistance responses. time.

### To Overcome Deferring Resistance

- Ask “When?” “A date/time in mind?”
- Set a time
- Specific
- Accountability (Check Back)
- Give concrete examples (Keep short accounts, but be able to say “on this day this happened...”)

### To Overcome Downplaying Resistance

- Try to understand, but realize it still affects the team
- A little poop ruins the brownie
- Explain
- Press in

### To Overcome Denying Resistance

- Give concrete examples

### To Overcome Distracting Resistance

- Listen. Don't accuse them.
- Persistence

### To Overcome Discrediting Resistance

- Persist with going after truth and result
- Bring a mediator

### To Overcome Destructive Resistance

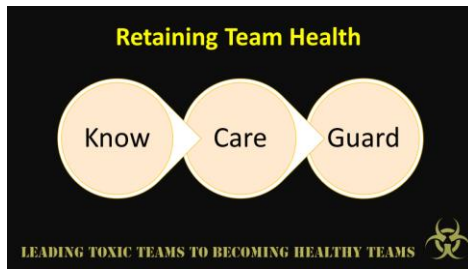
- PRAY (for them and a heart for them)

### To Overcome Multiple Forms of Resistance

- Neutral
- Head on
- Ask permission
- My feelings
- Boldness
- Compassion
- Prayer
- Investment
- Say, "ouch!"
- Listening and understanding
- Private
- Humility and Respect
- Serve them
- Affirm the parts you can
- Listen
- Vulnerability

---

### Know Care Guard



If resistance is overcome and the toxicity is effectively addressed, it is important for teams to retain its healthy environment.

Researchers who study healthy, high-performing teams have identified these 3 qualities as being especially effective toward retaining that health.

They are Know, Care, and Guard.

In other words:

- Healthy teams **KNOW** one another well. They know strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, what works and what doesn't...
- Not only do they know, but they **CARE**. It is not enough to simply know one another deeply, but to also care deeply. Healthy teams care so much that they truly serve one another.
- Finally, they aggressively **GUARD** against toxicity. They address and destroy toxicity any time it rears its ugly head.

---

## Healthy Team Practices



**We then share resources that are helpful to successfully promote knowing, caring, and guarding of our teams.**

**Here's what was shared as helpful:**

## **KNOWING ONE ANOTHER**

- Testimonies (I helps to know your teams' personal backgrounds/home/family cultures)
- MeyersBriggs
- Teambuilding/games/Bible Studies/Retreats
- Celebrate together (Holidays, burthdays, milestones big and small)
- StrengthsFinder
- Create Space, Team Time
- Emotional Intelligence
- Spiritual Gift inventories
- One on One, team time
- Book Study Together
- Praying for one another
- Being vulnerable
- Ice Breakers
- Knowing Humor

## **CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER**

- Team Time – Having fun together
- Restating Commitment
- Delegate based on Strengths
- Give Space for Self Care
- Active Listening
- Retreats
- Serving one another
- The Bible and Bible Study
- Pray together/ separate for one another
- Celebrate, birthdays (celebrate your team)
- Show appreciation (say thanks, look for small ways to bless)
- Be present during trials or crisis
- Meet needs (cook meals, babysit for a date night)

## **GUARD AGAINST TOXICITY**

- **Have each other's backs – no gossip → covenant**
- **SYIS (Sharpen Your Interpersonal Skills, [www.itpartners.org](http://www.itpartners.org) )**
- **Respect Confidentiality → trust**
- **Going directly to one another with problems → keeping short accounts**
- **Knowing one another's stories**
- **Defend one another against Slander (no idle gossip)**
- **Protect attitudes**
- **Learn to show support even when you don't agree with the situation**
- **Gain more support through more prayer**
- **Be vulnerable with your needs**
- **Respect**
- **Have fun**
- **Create boundaries**
- **Peer Accountability**
- **Mediated Discussions**
- **Ongoing Team Dynamics**
- **Reinforcing healthy attitudes**