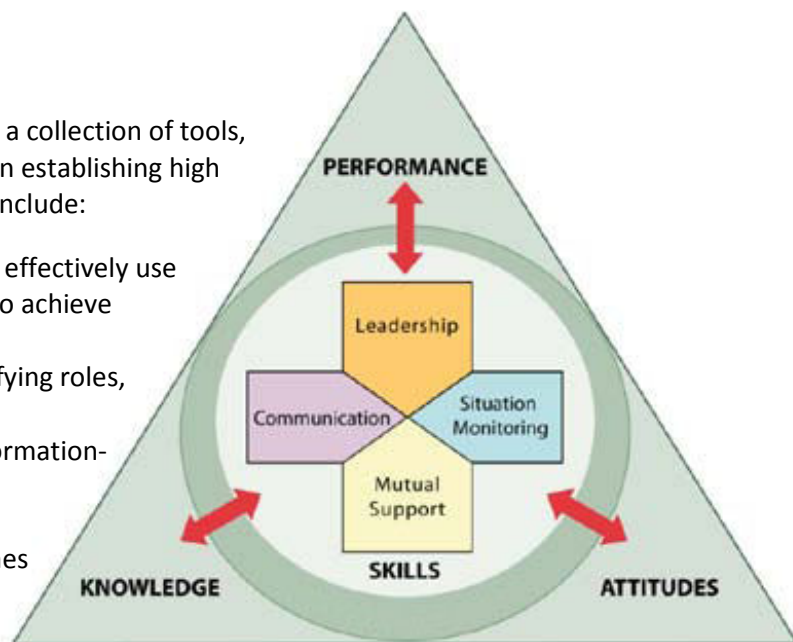


## TeamSTEPPS White Paper

**History:** Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety (TeamSTEPPS) was released by the Department of Defense Patient Safety Program (PSP) in 2006 as a systematic approach to integrate teamwork into practice at medical facilities. Created as a direct result of the 1999 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report entitled *To Err is Human*, which concluded that almost 100,000 deaths are caused by medical error every year, TeamSTEPPS is designed to improve team performance, efficiency, communication, and safety in healthcare. Since its release, TeamSTEPPS has become the national standard of teamwork training in the healthcare industry. The reason for this success is largely due to the fact that patient safety depends on the collaboration and interaction of teams that have extremely diverse backgrounds and training. Although it is focused on improving team functioning in hospitals, it is highly applicable to other industries as well because at its core, TeamSTEPPS is really all about improving team processes.

**What is TeamSTEPPS?** TeamSTEPPS is a collection of tools, strategies, and training curriculum focused on establishing high performing teams. The main areas of focus include:

- Creating high performing teams that effectively use people, resources, and information to achieve desired outcomes
- Increasing team awareness and clarifying roles, responsibilities, and outcomes
- Resolving conflict and improving information-sharing
- Eliminating barriers to quality, performance, and successful outcomes (including patient safety for hospital teams)



The diagram above shows the two-way interactions between team skills and outcomes (Source: TeamSTEPPS™ Pocket Guide). TeamSTEPPS focuses on the three team-related outcomes (performance, knowledge, and attitudes) through improving four teachable-learnable skills (leadership, communication, situation monitoring, and mutual support). To achieve the positive outcomes described at the edges of the triangle, a TeamSTEPPS program normally takes the following actions:

- Assess current organizational culture
- Analyze culture, survey results, and other data to create a teamwork improvement action plan
- Design/Implement a proposal to develop team-related competencies among staff
- Integrate TeamSTEPPS into daily practice

To achieve the large scale organization development program described above, TeamSTEPPS has developed an arsenal of tools and strategies that can be applied to *any* type of team.

**Tools and Strategies:** Possibly one of the most impressive things about TeamSTEPPS is its versatility. Interventions using TeamSTEPPS methodologies can run the gambit from organizational culture change to process improvement to teambuilding. The program described above is the most rigorous type of intervention and includes analysis, training/development, and changing team processes. If a less comprehensive approach is required (for example, if a team is experiencing conflict or communication issues), various strategies can be taught quickly and integrated into team processes to target specific areas of improvement. The **tools** needed to complete any and all TeamSTEPPS interventions have been validated through years of research and include:

- **Training Material:** training curriculum designed for adult learners, workbooks, slides, activities, icebreakers, and training evaluations are pre-made and proven to be effective in teaching strategies and principles.
- **Teamwork Questionnaires:** these measure attitudes towards teamwork and the current state of teamwork in an organization.
- **Leadership Briefing:** a packaged presentation can be delivered to leadership in an organization to explain why implementing TeamSTEPPS is a good idea.
- **Team Performance Observation Tool:** an easy to use tool that assesses team performance on various dimensions can be used to measure the impact of TeamSTEPPS interventions on performance.

TeamSTEPPS **strategies** are aimed at improving team performance through defining roles and responsibilities, improving communication and collaboration, and establishing a culture of learning. Below is a brief description of a few key strategies that make up the four teachable/learnable skills in TeamSTEPPS:

- **Brief:** short sessions before projects or during the formation of teams (i.e., before a patient arrives) that clarify roles and responsibilities, set up expectations for open communication and knowledge sharing, and inform team members of the specific task.
- **Debrief:** strategy for process improvement that encourages learning by reviewing and documenting the team process at the end of a task. It includes identifying what worked and what did not work and discussing what was learned and what can be done differently next time.
- **Shared Mental Model:** strategy that gets team members on the “same page” with other team members. It shows teams how to create and act on a common understanding of who is responsible for what task and what information/support is needed by each member. Being on the “same page” encourages collaborative planning, decision-making, and speaking-up.
- **Feedback:** provides a framework for encouraging constructive feedback among team members. Teaches team members about various types of feedback, how to give constructive feedback (timely, respectful, specific, directed, and considerate), and how to accept feedback.

**Outcomes:** Research has shown that TeamSTEPPS interventions are likely to result in the following outcomes:

- Increased Team Performance
- Adaptability
- Team Orientation
- Mutual Trust
- Improved Communication

TeamSTEPPS represents over 30 years of scientific research into team processes and performance. It has been applied in hospitals, like Harborview Medical Center, academic institutions like Harvard and Duke, in the military at combat support hospitals, and now in non-medical private and public organizations. It has revolutionized teamwork in the healthcare environment and saved countless lives and is still continuing to gain momentum in academic, public, and private institutions.