

How Healthy Is Your Learning Team?

University of Washington psychologist John Gottman (as cited in Gladwell, 2005) argues that you can determine the health and long-term stability of a relationship by looking carefully for signs of four powerful emotions: criticism, contempt, stonewalling, and defensiveness. To learn a little more about the emotional health of your collaborative group, please check all of the indicators below that accurately describe the state of relationships on your learning team.

<p>Learning Team: _____</p> <p>Your Name (optional): _____</p>
<p><i>Criticism is defined as “the expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistakes.”</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Criticism isn’t an issue at all on our learning team. <input type="checkbox"/> Our personal and professional commitments to one another allow us to work through conflict without criticism. <input type="checkbox"/> People on our learning team are criticized for instructional choices. <input type="checkbox"/> People on our learning team are criticized for personal traits: timeliness, quality of content, style, and attitude. <input type="checkbox"/> I think the criticisms being leveled at individuals are unproductive and hurtful. <input type="checkbox"/> Team members are criticized in almost every meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Criticisms often cross the line, becoming personal attacks. <input type="checkbox"/> I’m concerned about criticism on our team.
<p><i>Contempt is defined as “the feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless, or deserving scorn.”</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contempt isn’t an issue at all on our learning team. <input type="checkbox"/> Everyone on our learning team sees one another as professional and intellectual equals. <input type="checkbox"/> Our learning team is strong enough to address contempt openly. <input type="checkbox"/> Individual members of our learning team show contempt toward the professional ideas or personal traits of their peers. <input type="checkbox"/> Insults on our learning team are kept hidden. <input type="checkbox"/> Contempt is expressed openly toward colleagues in our team meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> Because of the severity of the damage done by the contempt on our team, I’m not sure we can ever move forward productively.
<p><i>Stonewalling is defined as “delaying or blocking (a request, process, or person) by refusing to answer questions or by giving evasive replies.”</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Stonewalling isn’t an issue at all on our learning team. <input type="checkbox"/> I feel like the members of our learning team are always open and honest with each other.

***Stonewalling* is defined as “delaying or blocking (a request, process, or person) by refusing to answer questions or by giving evasive replies.”**

- There have been times when individual members of our team seem evasive in conversations about professional practices.
- There have been times when individual members of our team seem evasive in conversations about personal conflicts or issues.
- We rarely have conversations without stonewalling.
- Stonewalling has become so common on our learning team that we have trouble making efficient decisions.

***Defensiveness* is defined as “an excessive sensitivity to criticism.”**

- Defensiveness isn't an issue at all on our learning team.
- Our learning team has established productive structures for giving and receiving critical feedback.
- Our learning team separates person from practice when talking about instruction and student learning.
- Individual members of our learning team are overly sensitive to criticism.
- I feel like I am constantly walking on eggshells during our team meetings, afraid that something I say will result in hurt feelings.
- Defensive behavior is crippling our team, regularly preventing us from being completely honest and open with one another.

Additional Comments: