Many assume that a team looks after itself; you put a few individuals together, call them a team, and off we go. But a team is like a human being in that it grows up and reaches maturity. It has its own personality, needs and characteristics.

The community advocates are a team – that is, you are a group of individuals brought together with a common goal, to improve the health and well being of the residents in your community.

**What makes a team a team?**

- The difference between a team and a group of people is that a team has a common goal
- A team reduces difficulties, by planning a process instead of each person going his or her own way
- Ideas flow better in a team, in that one idea can spark another from someone else
- There are emotional benefits – team members start to encourage and support each other, to understand each other better, and communicate more effectively
- Teams share decisions. No person likes a decision forced upon him or her. A team makes any decision together
- A hallmark of an excellent team is its members’ ability to say what they think or feel, without putting other people down or being put down themselves

**2 key features distinguish teams:**

**They have a common purpose**
- **The members cooperate and support each other**

**What does a team need to be successful?**

- Honesty and openness
- Mutual trust and support for all members
- A variety of members with different styles and approaches to issues
- Constant evaluation (“How are we doing?”)
The Team Leader

A team leader should possess the following qualities:
- Shares all available information
- Encourages participation and team decision making
- Allows people to work out details themselves
- Avoids trying to control everything

What do you do when your team is formed?

- Brainstorm for ideas when necessary (writing down all ideas without criticism, group them in categories, then eliminate what is unrealistic).
- Regularly review the progress of the group. What is going well? Why? What can we do better?
- Celebrate each success, large or small

Motivating others

- Get people to realize that they have power through their individual skills and knowledge
- Everyone needs to feel important, valued and respected
- Motivation stems from satisfaction in doing a good job or recognition by others for their efforts
- An even balance of power is a partnership.