

# TEAM NORMS ACTIVITY

This activity can create an experience that will illustrate the importance of norms for effective teamwork. Participants will work in small groups of seven to accomplish the team task of building a “patchwork quilt” using squares of coloured paper. The activity illustrates the confusion and conflict that can result when a clear and common understanding of how the team will work together has not been established.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATORS:

1. Print and cut out the coloured squares. You will need one set of 24 squares for each group of seven participants.
2. Print and cut the instruction cards (mandates) into separate, individual cards. Attach the bundle of seven cards together with a paper clip. You will need one set for every seven participants.
3. Organize participants into groups of five to seven people. Distribute the cards to each group. Each participant should take one card and keep their instructions secret. If less than seven people are in a group assign a second mandate to one or two people.
4. Share the following instructions with all participants:  
*“For the duration of this activity you must not speak. As a team, you must build a ‘patchwork quilt’ using only the coloured paper squares provided. Individually, you must make sure that the mandate provided on your individual instruction card is followed. Do NOT share this mandate with anyone else. When you are ready, you may begin building.”*
5. Try not to give any further instructions beyond what is outlined above. If participants ask for more details simply restate the instructions. There is enough information provided for them to accomplish the task.
6. Following the activity, discuss as a group what happened and what, if anything, made the task difficult. Each participant can now share their secret instructions. How did not speaking affect the team dynamic? How might this activity illustrate the importance of establishing shared group norms?

### MANDATE 1

*You are the builder and the only person who can create the quilt. If anyone else tries to touch the paper squares you must stop them!*

### MANDATE 3

*Your job is to make sure the quilt contains exactly three red squares (no more, no less!)*

### MANDATE 5

*Your job is to make sure there is a yellow square next to every blue square.*

### MANDATE 7

*Your job is to make sure the quilt contains at least four blue squares.*

### MANDATE 2

*Your job is to make sure the quilt is exactly four squares wide and four squares long.*

### MANDATE 4

*Your job is to make sure the quilt has NO green squares.*

### MANDATE 6

*Your job is to make sure there are no more than one blue square in every row and column of the quilt.*





