

LADDER OF ACCOUNTABILITY

What: Effective teams demonstrate a high level of leadership and accountability among the individual team members. The Ladder of Accountability describes eight levels of accountability. The top four describe a stance focused on movement toward the future. The bottom four describe a stance generally focused on the past or avoiding discomfort in the present. Choices higher on the ladder tend to increase anxiety in the short-term and decrease it in the long-term.

Why: This tool provides the team and individuals an effective way to look objectively at an issue(s) that they are dealing with and make some deliberate choices about how they want to handle it. The further up the ladder the team can move, typically the more choices they will make available to themselves. The greater the percentage of team members who choose stances in the top portion of the Ladder, the greater the chance the team has of collaborating and successfully attaining its goals.

When: When the team or individuals on the team are:

- Dealing with an issue.
- Wanting to build more effective relationships both internal and externally to the team
- Blaming others for their circumstances

How: Give the team members a copy of the Ladder of Accountability and explain what it is and why you want them to use it.

Have the team identify an issue or challenge that they are currently dealing with.

Have the team evaluate their current stance. Apply the descriptions of the various levels to their own behaviour in the issue or situation. Where are they?

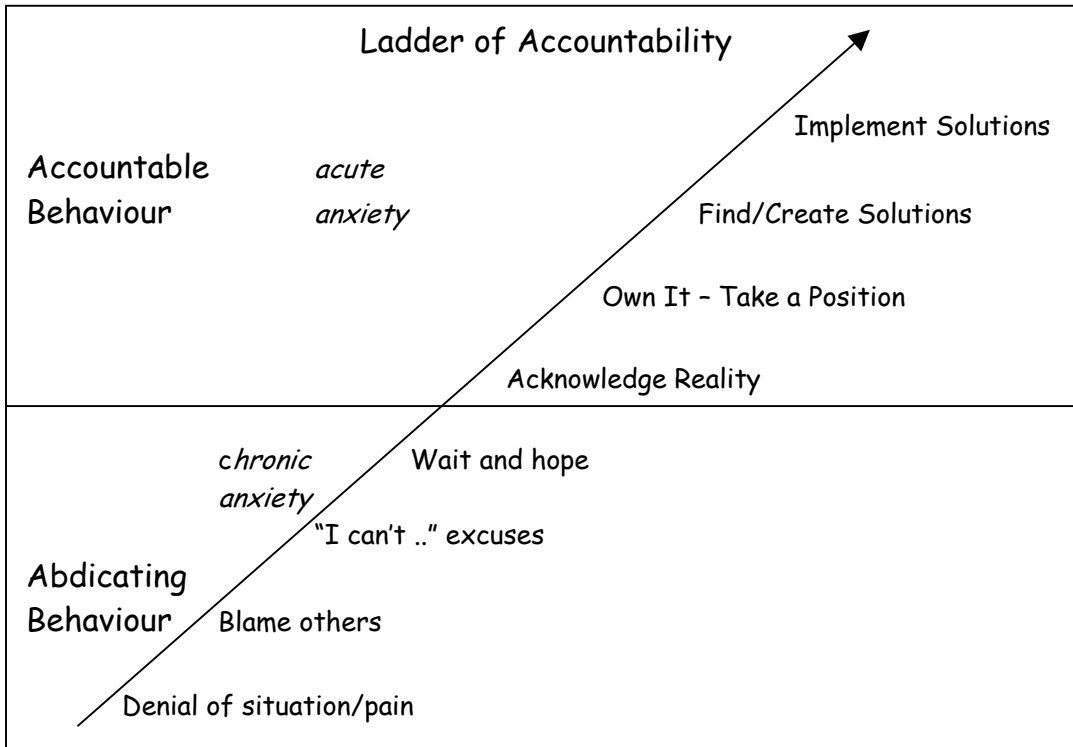
Have the team choose where they want to be.

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Ask the team to identify what they need to do differently if they want to take a stance on a different rung of the Ladder of Accountability.

(Option: Handout copies of the Ladder of Accountability to each of the team members and have them individually work through an issue they are dealing with. Have them debrief their work with a partner)

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Think of an issue or challenge you are currently dealing with.

Evaluate:

Identify your current stance. Apply the descriptions of the various levels to your own behaviour in a given situation. Where are you?

Choose:

Where do you want to be? Practice making distinctions between why you would choose one level over another.

Act:

What do you need to do differently if you want to take a stance on a different rung of the Ladder of Accountability? Talk to your partner about the actions needed to be consistent with your choices.