

Are you part of a winning team?



Debbie Hicks

If you work in diabetes care you rarely work in isolation. Most of us work as a member of a team. Recently I was trying to count how many teams I belong to and if I include social teams too, it amounts to double figures. How I function within those teams differs greatly depending on the task in hand and its context.

In order to be an effective team member it is imperative that you are able to understand your own behaviour and how that impacts on others. There are many assessment tools which facilitate this. I recently attended a meeting where all the delegates undertook the FIRO-B (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation–Behaviour) assessment prior to the meeting. This assessment tool was first developed in the US in the 1950s by Dr Will Shultz. Shultz theorised that beyond our physical needs we each have unique interpersonal needs: inclusion, control and affection (see *Box 1*). Since the 1950s this tool has helped people around the world understand how their need for inclusion, control and affection can shape their interactions with others at work or in their personal lives. This is now one of the most widely used tools for helping people better understand themselves and how they can work more effectively with others (Pringle, 2008).

Prior to the meeting, each delegate completed a FIRO-B questionnaire which was analysed. During the meeting the facilitator, Mark Pringle, used the individual assessments to illustrate:

- How you come across to others, and why this may not be the way you see yourself or the impression you might want to make.
- How and why conflict develops between well-meaning people.
- How to understand your own needs, and how to manage them as you interact with others.

Although I have, over the years, gained an insight into my own behaviour and how it affects others, after using this tool, I gained a greater understanding as to *why* I act like I do. More importantly, I can use the new information gained in a positive way to improve the way I work in teams, both at work and socially.

Upon reflection, attendance to this type of meeting would fit easily into the personal and professional development dimension section of the Knowledge and Skills Framework appraisal, which, of course, all NHS employees (except doctors) need to have with their manager on an annual basis to track individual performance and development. I am including the experience in my appraisal (which is due soon).

I would encourage anyone, who has the chance, to participate in a meeting centred round the FIRO-B assessment tool to grab the opportunity with both hands as I am sure it will be an enlightening and fun day (Visit www.bestraining.co.uk for further details). ■

Pringle M (2008) *Introduction to the FIRO-B(r) instrument in Organisations*. Oxford Psychologists Press, Oxford

Box 1. Three fundamental dimensions of interpersonal needs according to the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation–Behaviour tool (Pringle, 2008).

| INCLUSION | CONTROL | AFFECTION |
|---|---|---|
| Is about recognition, belonging, participation, contact with others, and how you relate to groups | Concerns influence, leadership, responsibility, and decision-making | Is about closeness, warmth, sensitivity, openness, and how you relate to others |

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