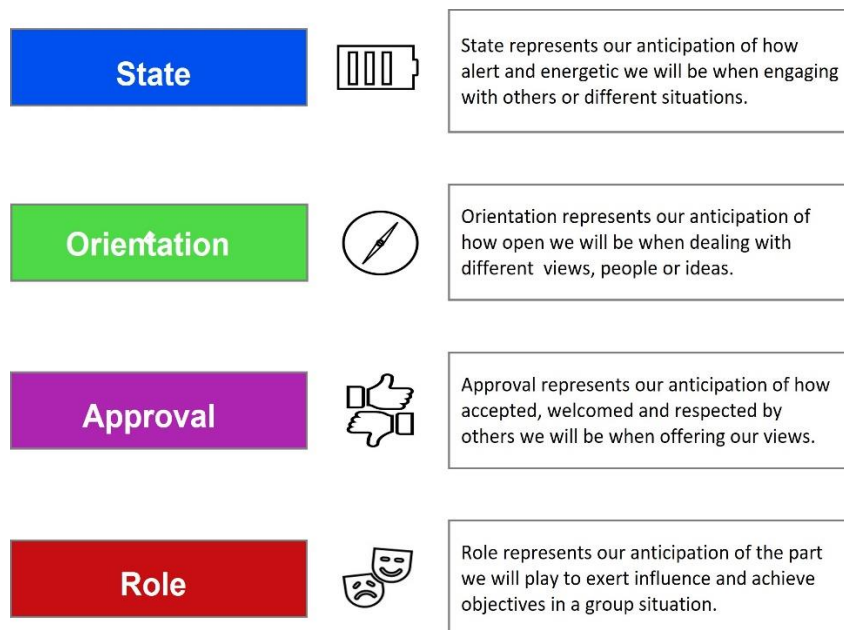


Collaborative Disposition Index™

SOAR Model™

We often enter collaborative working situations without any thinking or preparation. In fact we are often completely unconscious of what is going on inside us as we approach project meetings or respond to discussions or even when we read an email. The introduction of an instrument to help us become more aware of our collaborative disposition will assist in ensuring we enter collaborative working arrangements in the frame of mind needed to optimise success.



BACKGROUND

The SOAR model was developed to help people quickly reflect on how well prepared they are to enter collaborative working situations. This reflection will help improve and shape their approach to enable successful interactions in any collaborative working project. The model uses simple, easy to understand language that can be understood at most educational levels.

The SOAR Model was designed as a tool which allows us to pause and reflect on the approach which each of us anticipate using when entering a collaborative working situation with internal or external partners. With regular use the model also develops awareness of the collaborative disposition of others.

SOAR Dimensions

STATE

State represents our anticipation of how alert and energetic we will be when engaging with different people or situations. State is symbolised by the battery icon.

We all accept that our physical energy and mental energy is depleted when we undertake physical and mental effort. Our State is the equivalent of an energy fuel cell which we draw upon when we face challenges that require additional effort from us. When our tank is full, we feel we have the energy to address and overcome challenges which stretch us, in fact some challenges may produce more fuel for our tank, especially if we succeed in overcoming a difficulty or achieving a goal. When our tank is nearing empty, we find we will only use what little reserves we have just to get through our normal day to day activities. Additional challenges which require extra energy are often rejected or avoided. Our willingness to engage with others can often be determined by how full or empty our energy tank is.

State can be affected by many things ranging from feeling physically tired or feeling distracted after hearing disappointing news, to coping with more serious issues such as bereavement or long-term illness. Things which leave us feeling sad, stressed or angry can adversely affect any attempts we make to maintain a collaborative disposition. Conversely, things which leave us happy, upbeat and joyous are more likely to help us maintain a collaborative disposition.

State can be short term and temporary or long term and permanent. An angry exchange with someone can leave us feeling disturbed, distracted and a little annoyed. A happy exchange can lift our spirits and leave us feeling buoyant. We can inadvertently carry that temporary State into our next interaction. Poor health can leave us with a more permanent State where we feel unable to cope with even the slightest disagreement in a relationship.

It is extremely important that we maintain an awareness of our State before engaging in any collaborative working relationship with others.

If we score in the lower range of State, we may need to be conscious that we may not give any interaction the attention it deserves. Similarly, we may also be viewed as someone who is sapping the emotional energy of those around them. A higher range score may indicate others may perceive us as someone who is overpowering and “a bit too much” for those around us who are scoring mid-range or lower scores. We want to have enough energy to not only cope with any adversity in a collaborative working relationship, but to also inject some energy into our interactions with people to help them improve their own collaborative disposition.

ORIENTATION

Orientation represents our anticipation of how open we will be when dealing with different views, people or ideas. Orientation is symbolised by the compass icon.

Our Orientation reflects how open or closed we are to views which are different from, or in opposition to, our own, particularly from awkward or difficult people. It reflects how stimulated or threatened we are by the potential outcomes of interacting with others. Orientation is our desire to “move towards” or “move away” from a point of view, person or a particular course of action. Our Orientation has its roots in the fight or flight response to threat or danger as well as our desire to seek rewards or recognition.

If our experiences of interacting with people have generally been positive and good, then our Orientation will generally be activated to move towards others and engage with them or their ideas, expecting similar enjoyable experiences to happen. “Moving towards” types of people will be more likely to initiate contact or engage in open discussions. If our experiences of interacting with people have been negative and poor, then our Orientation will generally be activated to move away from others regardless of their ideas, expecting similar negative experiences to occur. “Moving Away” types of people will be more likely to avoid contact and shy away from open discussions.

Deeply held beliefs can cause us to move away from or deliberately avoid any relationship with those who hold opposing views. Conversely, we may move towards them to argue or fight with them because our belief or conviction may overcome our normal reservations.

Under certain circumstances our Orientation may be skewed because our State is affected by stress, depression or exhaustion, or where our lives are busy, dominated by heavy workload or other activities.

Too strong a tendency to ‘move away’ rejects possibilities and we may be viewed as having a negative approach to collaboration. Too strong a tendency to ‘move towards’ may reflect a passion or obsession that may be unacceptable to others who may suspect they are being pushed in a particular direction.

APPROVAL

Approval represents our anticipation of how accepted, welcomed and respected by others we will be when offering our views. Approval is symbolised by the Thumbs Up/Down icon.

We have all been conditioned from a very young age to seek approval and to avoid the pain of rejection. This conditioning leads us to do things to win approval and do things to avoid the pain of rejection.

Although we may be in a higher-level State and our Orientation may be “moving towards”, we can often find ourselves not engaging in a collaborative relationship because we are unsure if our contribution would be valued or deserved to be heard. We see this often in a room of people not wishing to be the first to answer when a question is asked. Approval is felt by those who believe their contributions are valued. They will be the first to put their hands up to contribute.

Many of us are not aware of the defences we created to cope with rejection. We may react automatically to certain situations without ever wondering why we reacted in that way. If we

are emotionally hurt or annoyed by an interaction of some kind then we usually feel somebody else caused it when in fact their actions only resurrected old feelings of previous rejections.

Most of us look for indications of Approval from others to ensure we are accepted by them before we attempt or continue to collaborate. Some of us are over confident enough to give ourselves permission to interact with another person whether that person gives us permission or not.

Too strong a tendency to feel rejected stifles our ability to contribute but too strong a tendency to feel acceptance may leave us feeling overconfident and perceived as overbearing, and for some it may also be sign of narcissism.

ROLE

Role represents our anticipation of the part we will play to exert influence and achieve objectives in a group situation. Role is symbolised by the theatre masks icon.

We all play different roles in our lives depending on the situation we find ourselves in, and the people we deal with. The Role we play is often an unconscious choice which we habitually make in response to any situation we find ourselves in. One moment we may be playing the role of parent or manager, the next we may be playing the Role of expert or novice.

Our Role is often guided by our motivations. Sometimes we are interested in nurturing and maintaining a relationship because we value it. Sometimes we have an ulterior motive and are using the relationship to achieve it. We may adopt the role of friend with someone simply because we enjoy their company. Similarly, we may adopt the role of manager because we want to ensure things get done. Sometimes we may adopt the role of coach or mentor to help someone achieve their own goals.

If we have been successful by adopting a certain role, then we will probably adopt that role more readily in most situations. If we have had poor experiences adopting certain roles, we will probably avoid them, even though they may be a better fit for developing and maintaining a collaborative disposition. Often the success or failure of our collaborative working relationships are due to the Role we choose to play within them.

The roles we choose often reflects our wish to control or manipulate another person or group, or to defer to them because we love, or honour, or respect their abilities and expertise, or we fear them or their ability to harm us. Too strong a tendency to control is a reflection of our own desire to dominate rather than work with others. Too strong a tendency to defer to others may reflect our disinterest or our tendency to wilt in the face of conflict.