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# So What Will You Get Out of the 15.279 Team Experience?

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- Practice in teamwork skills
- Friendships
- A grade
- A richer sense of your
  - Skills
  - Propensities
  - Style relative to others

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# Agenda

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- It's all about communication
- Three concrete tips
- Where teams can get into trouble
  - Individual behaviors
  - Group social psychology

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# It's All About Communication

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Practicing good communication skills

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Refraining from communication roadblocks



Engaging in dialogue

Building trust

Being productive!

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# To Communicate Well . . .

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- Listen well
- Observe carefully
- Give feedback constructively

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# Communication Behaviors to Observe

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- Who participates
- Who doesn't
- How do people take turns?
- Who talks to whom?
- Who responds to whom?
- How are interruptions handled?
- Is silence O.K.?
- Is anyone dominating the conversation?
- How are decisions made?
  - By consensus?
  - By voting?
  - By one person?

And be sure to  
observe your own  
feelings, reactions,  
and behaviors

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# Communication Can Go Awry If We . . .

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- Order or command
- Warn or threaten
- Preach or moralize
- Cross examine
- Label, evaluate, or judge
- Tease or make light of
- Respond with sarcasm
- Avoid discussing an issue
- Assume instead of listen
- Forget differences in communication style may be related to gender or cultural differences

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# Four Principles of Communication

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- All communication takes place on the content and relationship level
- We cannot not communicate
- Often the problem with communication is the assumption of it
- Metacommunication is very useful



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# When You Have Built Trust, You Have . . .

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- Acted with consistency and coherence
- Demonstrated concern
- Treated others with a sense of fairness
- Fulfilled obligations and commitments

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# When You Are Engaging in Dialogue, You Are . . .

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- Seeing things from the other person's perspective
- Really listening
- Expressing your concerns as *your concerns*, not as another person's problem
- Giving others a stake in the process or outcome

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# Three Concrete Tips

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- Use a facilitator/coordinator
- Delegate tasks effectively, using a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)
- Set some ground rules

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# Work Breakdown Structure

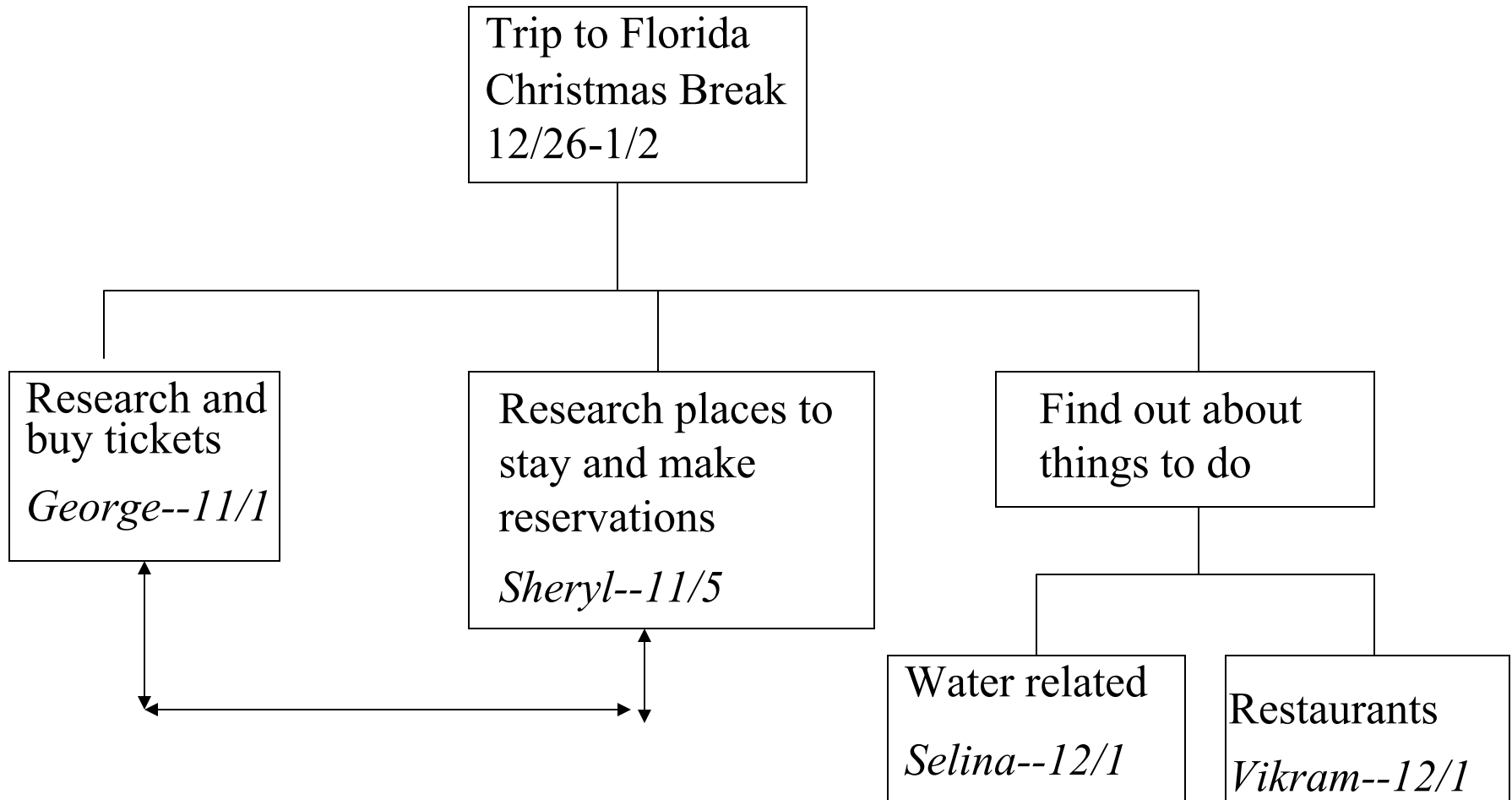
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- Way to organize a series of tasks to accomplish a project objective. Consists of:
  - Hierarchical diagram of tasks
  - Person responsible for executing the task
  - Deadline to have the task completed
  - Interdependencies with other tasks
- Each task in a WBS should contribute to the goal of delivering the required material on time and done well

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# Sample WBS--Planning a Vacation

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# Facilitator/Coordinator

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- Why? If everyone is responsible, no one is
- The coordinator/facilitator should
  - Focus the team toward the task
  - Get all team members to participate
  - Keep the team to its agreed-upon time frame
  - Suggest alternatives
  - Help team members confront problems
  - Summarize team decisions

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# Setting Ground Rules

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- Goals and expectations
- Work norms
- Facilitator norms
- Communication norms
- Meeting norms
- Consideration norms

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# What Makes Teams Troublesome\*

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- Individual behaviors
- Group social psychology

\*Even people with good intentions can get into trouble.



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# Individual Behaviors

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- “Ego integrity”
- Self-interest versus group interest
- Inability to observe self and/or use feedback
- Different styles of
  - Learning
  - Interaction
  - Expression

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# Group Behaviors

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- “Defensive routines”
- Us versus them
- Reluctance to test assumptions publicly
- Getting “off task”
- Lack of boundaries
  - Ill defined roles
  - Unclear objectives and/or expectations