

TEAM PERFORMANCE IS INFLUENCED BY TASK AND MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES.

A **task activity** is an action taken by a team member that directly contributes to the group's performance purpose.

A **maintenance activity** is an action taken by a team member that supports the emotional life of the group.

Distributed leadership is when any and all members contribute helpful task and maintenance activities to the team.

Disruptive behaviors are self-serving and cause problems for team effectiveness.

Research on the group process identifies two types of activities that are essential if team members are to work well together over time.⁴¹ **Task activities** contribute directly to the team's performance purpose; **maintenance activities** support the emotional life of the team as an ongoing social system. Although you might expect that these are things that team leaders or managers should be doing, this is only partially correct. In fact, all team members should share the responsibilities for task and maintenance leadership.

The concept of **distributed leadership** in teams makes every member continually responsible for both recognizing when task or maintenance activities are needed and taking actions to provide them. Leading through task activities involves making an effort to define and solve problems and advance work toward performance results. Without task activities, such as initiating agendas and sharing information, teams have difficulty accomplishing their objectives. Leading through maintenance activities, such as encouraging others and reducing tensions, helps strengthen and perpetuate the team as a social system.

Figure 13.5 shows that task and maintenance activities stand in distinct contrast to dysfunctional or **disruptive behaviors**. These include obvious self-serving behaviors that you often see and perhaps even engage in yourself—things such as aggressiveness, excessive joking, and nonparticipation. Think about this the next time one of your groups is drifting toward ineffectiveness. Think also what you and other members can do to correct things by fulfilling distributed leadership responsibilities.

TEAM PERFORMANCE IS INFLUENCED BY COMMUNICATION NETWORKS.

A **decentralized communication network** allows all members to communicate directly with one another.

Teams use the different communication networks shown in **Figure 13.6** as they work and interact together.⁴² In a **decentralized communication network**, all members communicate directly with one another. Sometimes called the *all-channel* or *star* structure, this arrangement works well for tasks that require lots of creativity, information processing, and problem solving. Use of a decentralized communication network creates an *interacting team* in which all members actively work together and share information. Member satisfaction on successful interacting teams is usually high.

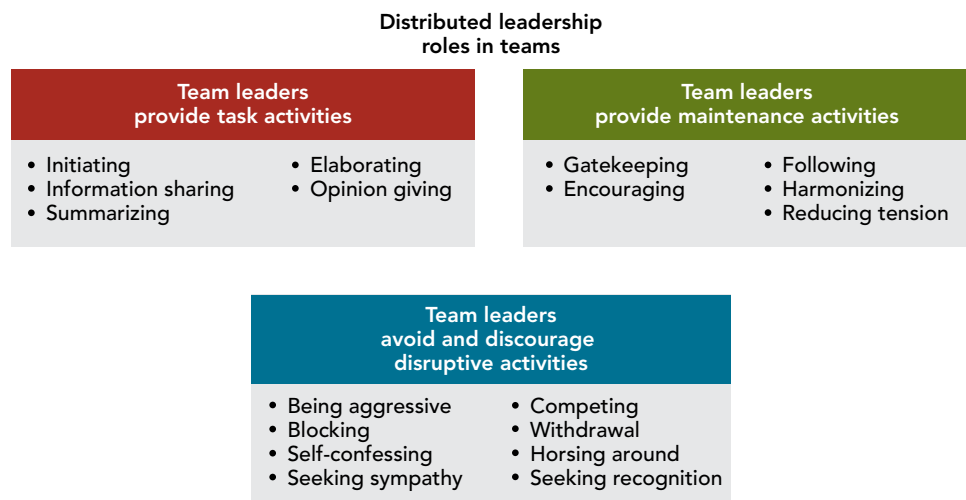


FIGURE 13.5 What are the distributed leadership roles in teams?

Teams function with a combination of task and maintenance activities that both appointed leaders and all members are responsible for providing. Task activities directly move the task forward while maintenance activities support the emotional health and social cohesion of the team as a whole. An additional and important distributed leadership responsibility in teams is the avoidance of personal displays of disruptive behaviors and also the discouragement of disruptive behaviors by others.