The Healthcare Team Fitness Tool is a web-based team development system that enables healthcare organizations to achieve sustained improvement team effectiveness, engagement, the staff experience, and ultimately the quality of patient care, in a more meaningful, efficient and cost effective manner by providing the process and tools needed to strengthen and measure the behaviors and practices most critical to healthcare team performance.

Powerful Healthcare Team Assessment
Measure teams against the 7 Elements of a High Performance Healthcare Team and quickly identify team strengths and the specific factors preventing your team members from working more effectively together.

Actionable Assessment Results
Get focused on team needs quickly with meaningful data that ensures you and your teams know exactly what is needed for better results.

Ongoing Action and Sustainability
Enable teams to take ownership of their own development and take ongoing action for sustained improvement over the long-term.

Needs-Based Team Solutions
Get beyond "Now What?" with powerful team development modules that target each team's unique needs. Complete with facilitator guides, handouts and power point slides.

The Healthcare Team Fitness Tool is based on close to 25 years of research in team performance. More recently, between 2004 and 2008 we conducted two research projects on behalf of the SOGC and Salus Global Corporation for the purpose of gaining a greater understanding of what constitutes a patient safety culture, high performance healthcare teams, and effective communication within a healthcare environment. 18 healthcare facilities in Canada and the United States participated in the research. We conducted an extensive literature review along with16 inter-professional focus groups, 53 interviews with physicians, nurses, administrators and midwives, and administered 4 different surveys (329 surveys were returned).

The outcomes of this research, along with the work we have conducted with teams and leaders for the past 25 years, supported our identification of the behaviors and practices most essential for a healthcare team to work to its fullest potential and led to the development of the healthcare team assessment that assesses the 7 elements of a high performance healthcare team. The team assessment was tested for its reliability in 2014 by St. Louis University and was found to be highly reliable. The 7 elements of a high performance healthcare team are described in our book*, Improving Healthcare Team Performance: The 7 Requirements for Excellence in Patient Care*. The book is required reading at Royal Roads University and Kettering College and is used by health leaders around the world to strengthen team effectiveness and the quality of patient care.

Why the HTFT is Key to Improving Team Performance

In order for a team to become even better than it is, the goals to be achieved must be clearly understood. Team members usually have ideas as to what could be better in their team. Few, however, have specific knowledge of what is required for high performance teamwork. Therefore, even when a team is consciously trying to improve, critical aspects that may be blocking team performance are often overlooked. The HTFT ensures that leaders and team members understand the behaviors and practices essential to working together effectively in the delivery of quality care and focuses the team's attention on the areas that will bring the greatest return given the team's specific strengths and opportunities for improvement. When the HTFT is used consistently across the healthcare facility as a model for team effectiveness the behaviors and practices most essential to effective teamwork and inter-professional collaboration will be more regularly demonstrated and over time will become ingrained in the culture.

The 7 Elements of a High Performance Healthcare Team

The HTFT measures each of the following seven critical elements of a high performance healthcare team.

Cohesiveness	Healthy Climate	Open Communication	Change Compatibility
	Shared Leadership	Team Members' Contribution	Shared Learning

Cohesiveness

Cohesiveness refers to the degree to which the team pulls together in the same direction. Cohesiveness requires agreement and commitment to *what* the team is in place to achieve (mandate, goals, and objectives), as well as *how* it will achieve them (values, priorities, and procedures).

Sample of items that measure this element:

- Our actions demonstrate that we are all working towards the same team goals and objectives.
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and accepted by all team members.
- We overcome individual differences to pull together in the best interest of the patient.

Healthy Climate

Healthy Climate refers to how members feel about the way the team functions, including their level of comfort with team norms of behaviour. If the climate is not positive, honesty and openness are lacking and team members may not fully trust and respect one another.

Sample of items that measure this element:

- There is a feeling of openness and trust in our team.
- Each member of our team is treated with equal respect.
- I feel good about being a member of this team.

Open Communication

Poor communication within healthcare organizations is cited as a major contributing factor in patient safety incidents. The degree of open communication is reflected by a team's ability to communicate clearly, accurately, and respectfully, with the freedom to express opinions and to ask questions.

Sample of items that measure this element:

- We communicate with each other in a respectful manner at all times.
- I am able to communicate my point of view without fear of reprisal.
- I feel free to question the decisions of others regardless of their level of authority.

Team Members' Contribution

Team members' contribution measures the degree to which team members individually contribute to the team's by fulfilling their team responsibilities. Examples include keeping one another informed, sharing the load, and actively participating by looking for opportunities to improve the team's ability to provide quality patient care by sharing ideas and concerns.

Sample of items that measure this element:

- Team members look for opportunities to improve care practice/service delivery.
- Team members focus on what is best for the team and the patient rather than themselves.
- Team members recognize when others require assistance and proactively offer help whenever possible.

Shared Learning

Learning is at the heart of a culture focused on team performance and quality care. This element measures the degree to which the team actively reflects on experiences, shares knowledge and provides feedback in a blame free, 'what can we learn from this' manner so that learning becomes part of the team's regular day-to-day practice.

Sample of items that measure this element:

- We take the initiative to share knowledge and experiences with one another, including sharing learning from mistakes.
- We take time to reflect on, and discuss, how to improve our care practice/service delivery and team effectiveness.
- We approach the discussion of errors in a blame free, "What can we learn from this?" manner.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership requires that each team member is appropriately self-directed, involved in the decision making process and is an equal member of the team in that their input is both valued and respected.

Sample of items that measure this element:

- I am empowered to make decisions within my own area(s) of expertise.
- Input from team members is used whenever possible.
- Team members take the initiative to solve issues on their own whenever possible rather than passing them on to our leader.

Change Compatibility

The team that thrives in healthcare today must be able to maintain high performance in an environment of accelerated and constant change. Change compatibility requires receptivity to change, adaptability to change, and the effective evaluation of opportunities for change.

Sample of items that measure this element:

- Our team is open to new ideas.
- We take a positive attitude toward change with which we may not agree but over which we have no control.
- We are able to manage the volume of change without it impacting the quality of patient care.