# MODULE 1 - INTRODUCTION TO TOP GUN TEAMWORK AND VMAX GROUP

**Key Objectives:**

* Understand course objectives, flow, and completion requirements.
* Certification as a Top Gun Teamwork Facilitator.

**Key Takeaways:**

* VMax Group leverages lessons from elite military teams, especially fighter pilots, to improve teamwork and leadership.
* The Top Gun Teamwork (TGT) Methodology focuses on:
  + Inspiring leader accountability.
  + Increasing organizational trust.
  + Elevating overall performance.

**Course Overview:**

* **Facilitator Role:** You’ll learn to deliver the TGT Methodology to teams, unlocking their full potential using existing strengths.
* **Core Principle:** VMax helps remove limiting factors and unleash inherent talents.
* **Military Inspiration:** The course draws heavily from fighter pilot "Debrief" culture, focused on continuous improvement and high performance.

**VMax Group Background:**

* **Origins:** Consultants are ex-military, mainly US Air Force Weapons School graduates (Air Force's equivalent of Navy’s Top Gun program).
* **Focus:** The same methods that enhance fighter squadrons are applied to organizational teams.

**At Course Completion:**

* You will be certified as a **Top Gun Teamwork Facilitator**.
* Certification enables actionable deployment of the TGT Methodology.
* VMax Group will continue to support your growth with new courses and content.

**Next Steps:**

* Continued learning and certification opportunities are in development.
* VMax Group is committed to building a lasting relationship with facilitators, offering ongoing support and new resources.

# MODULE 2 - FOUNDATIONS OF TOP GUN TEAMWORK

**Key Objectives:**

* Understand the origins of the Top Gun Teamwork debrief methodology.
* Learn VMax Group's foundational principles and how to apply them as a facilitator.

**Debriefing Overview:**

* Originated in the military, particularly in aviation.
* Structured to evaluate decisions, actions, and outcomes from planning to execution.
* Key benefits:
  + Celebrating successes
  + Troubleshooting challenges
  + Building relationships
  + Providing closure
  + Improving future performance

**Impact of Debriefing:**

* Leaders improve decision-making.
* Teams become more effective and efficient.
* Organizations see better results over time.

**Military Connection:**

* Military aviation refined debriefing methodology: **Situation Awareness, Decision, Execution.**
* All team members contribute to post-mission analysis for continuous improvement.
* Psychological safety is key to debrief success and performance growth.

**Support for the Methodology:**

* Backed by experts like Timothy Clark (Psychological Safety), Patrick Lencioni (Team Dysfunctions), and John Maxwell (Leadership).
* Emotional Intelligence and mission alignment (e.g., Simon Sinek’s "Start with Why") are crucial components.

**Key Insights from Thought Leaders:**

* Emotional Intelligence (Bradberry & Greaves): Focus on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.
* Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes & Posner): Leaders should model, inspire, challenge, enable, and encourage.

**Conclusion:**

* TGT methodology is well-supported by academic and popular leadership principles.
* Proven success in military and organizational settings ensures its effectiveness.

**Foundational Principles:**

* **Debriefing Framework:** Top Gun Teamwork (TGT) addresses leadership accountability and organizational culture.
* **Asymmetrical Accountability:** Leaders should uphold the same standards they expect from others. TGT directly addresses this negative trait.
* **Leadership Accountability:** Effective leaders welcome feedback, improve continuously, and align with TGT principles.
* **Impact on Organizations:** TGT fosters psychological safety, enhances employee contentment, and improves retention.
* **Key Metrics:** Leadership success is measured by personal growth, organizational advancements, and tangible results.
* **Core Principles:** Leadership-focused, organization-centric, and results-oriented.

**Purpose and Mission:**

* **Understanding Purpose:** Purpose ("why") drives an organization, while mission ("what") defines tasks. Teams must understand both for success.
* **Team Alignment:** Teams that know their purpose are more engaged and contribute meaningfully to organizational goals.
* **Historical Example (Desert Storm):** Coalition efforts were driven by a clear global purpose—preserving international boundaries.
* **Team Purpose:** Each team must align with the broader organizational purpose for optimal performance.
* **Katzenbach & Smith Insight:** Many teams lack clarity on their purpose, which TGT helps address for improved performance and talent retention.

**Key Takeaways:**

* TGT addresses leadership gaps, clarifies purpose, and aligns teams with organizational missions for enhanced success.

**Mission:**

* **Definition:** An organization's mission defines *what* it does.
* **Desert Storm Example:**
  + **Why (Purpose):** Protecting internationally recognized boundaries.
  + **What (Mission):** Liberating Kuwait.

**Key Concepts:**

* **Team of Teams Approach:** Each team contributes to the larger mission with specific roles (e.g., logistics, air superiority, sea lane security).
* **Mission Elements:**
  + Preparation & planning.
  + Setting objectives/milestones.
  + Execution, refinement, and potential repetition.

**Mission Execution:**

* **Alignment:** Each team must understand their key tasks, purpose, and the desired end state for success.
* **Consistency:** Staying focused on mission objectives, despite challenges, ensures success.

**Historical Example (Titanic):**

* **Misalignment:** The deck crew continued routine tasks instead of responding to the threat because leadership failed to communicate a change in mission.

**Mission Sets:**

* **Components of Larger Mission:** Mission sets contribute to the larger mission while fulfilling the team’s purpose.
* **TGT Application:** Teams must constantly revisit their purpose and mission to stay aligned and successful.

**Team Purpose and Mission Statements:**

* **Facilitator's Role:** Assist teams in developing purpose and mission statements.
* **Starting Point:** Begin by identifying the organization's purpose.
* **Team's Purpose:** Should align with the organization's purpose, developed with leadership input.
* **Mission-Purpose Alignment:** Both should complement each other and be periodically refined to ensure alignment and effectiveness.
* **Example (VMax Group):**
  + **Purpose (WHY):** "Teach and inspire Real Teamwork to keep economies strong."
  + **Mission (WHAT):** "Teach, inspire, and nurture teams to work more effectively."

**Purpose vs. Mission:**

* **Purpose:** Typically constant, explaining why the organization exists.
* **Mission:** Action-oriented, describing what the organization does to fulfill its purpose.
* **Mission Refinement:** Missions may be tweaked over time to better achieve purpose, often assessed through historical performance data.

**Team Life Cycle:**

* **Phases:**
  + Mission Planning.
  + Mission Briefing.
  + Execution.
  + Debrief.
  + Debrief Expectation.
* **Goal:** Execute well, ensure accountability, learn continuously, and improve.

**Proper Preflight Planning Prevents Pathetic Performance**

* **Mission Clarity:** Define the mission precisely; avoid complacency and assumptions.
* **Clarifying Questions:** Engage leadership to ensure mission accuracy; thorough planning is crucial to avoid frustration later.
* **Research and Preparation:** Identify every aspect of the mission and define what success looks like (desired end state).
* **Importance:** This phase sets the foundation for success and future debriefs.

**Mission Briefing**

* **Synchronization:** Align team members on the mission and objectives.
* **Communication:** Clearly convey mission details and objectives; reference them in future debriefs.
* **Chronological Structure:** Organize the briefing based on the mission’s major elements and execution plan.
* **Success Criteria:** Define what success looks like for the mission or mission set.
* **Open Dialogue:** Allow time for questions to encourage discussion and clarification.

**Mission Execution**

* **Implementation:** Carry out the approved plan as outlined in the briefing.
* **Individual Responsibility:** Each member is accountable for their tasks, regardless of rank.
* **Team Collaboration:** Shared responsibilities and execution of the briefed plan are vital.
* **Lessons Learned:** Apply insights from previous cycles to improve execution and assess effectiveness.

**Transition to Debrief**

* **Preparation for Debrief:** Reflect on execution to facilitate discussions on improvements and performance.

**Debriefing**

* **Role in Team Life Cycle:** Connects mission planning, briefing, and execution.
* **Focus Areas:**
  + What went well and what didn’t, with emphasis on root causes.
  + Accountability for roles in mission success or failure.
* **Looking Forward:** Assign responsibilities for future missions and foster a culture of trust and empowerment.

**Key Expectations of the Debrief**

* **Accountability:** Assess performance based on planning, briefing, and execution.
* **Action:** Develop actionable plans for reinforcing successes and addressing failures.
* **Continuous Improvement:** Focus on lessons learned to enhance future performance.

**Return to Mission Planning**

* **Refinement Opportunity:** Assess and update mission objectives based on debrief insights.
* **Reflection Questions:**
  + What should be mimicked or changed?
  + Why did the plan succeed or fail?
  + Are metrics or desired outcomes due for change?
* **Define Success:** Reassess what success looks like for future iterations to ensure alignment and effectiveness.

**Summary of Team Life Cycle**

* **Importance:** Essential for the TGT methodology; enhances success rates and efficiency when applied effectively.
* **Outcome:** Teams that engage with the Team Life Cycle are likely to succeed more often and achieve results more quickly.

**The Four Stages of Psychological Safety**

* **Definition:** Psychological safety involves feeling included, safe to learn, contribute, and challenge the status quo**.**

**Stages of Psychological Safety**

1. **Inclusion**
   * Informal admission into the team.
   * Need for acceptance precedes the need to be heard.
   * Team members feel invited and accepted without needing prior input.
2. **Learner**
   * Safe to engage in discovery, ask questions, and make mistakes.
   * Destroyed by belittling or harsh correction.
   * Encouraged through open discussion and inquisitive questioning.
3. **Contributor**
   * Autonomy to participate as an active team member.
   * Granted status as competence is demonstrated.
   * Must adhere to social norms to maintain team dynamics.
4. **Challenger**
   * Ability to challenge the status quo without fear of reprisal.
   * Acts as a change agent, offering innovative ideas.
   * High levels of respect and autonomy are present.

**Importance of Psychological Safety**

* **TGT Methodology:** Promotes advancement through all four stages of psychological safety.
* **Emotional Intelligence (EQ):** Essential for effective debriefing and fostering psychological safety.
* **Leadership Role:** Secure leaders want to establish and maintain all four stages within their teams.

**Creating and Maintaining Psychological Safety**

* **Long-Term Process:** Building psychological safety takes time, maturity, and effort.
* **Risk of Destruction:** Can be rapidly lost; leaders must empower managers to safeguard it.
* **VMAX Group’s Top Gun Teamwork:** Fosters exceptional psychological safety, benefiting leaders, teams, and organizations.

# MODULE 3: SKILLSET OF A TOP GUN TEAMWORK FACILITATOR

**Objective:** Understand the necessary skills to facilitate Top Gun Teamwork, focusing on planning methods and the debrief process.

**Key Concepts**

* **E.A.G.L.E. Planning Model:** A 5-step approach to effective planning that promotes team unity and empowerment.
  + **Importance:** Enhances mission planning and integrates seamlessly with the Team Life Cycle and F4 debrief.

**E.A.G.L.E. Planning Steps**

**E - Expectations**

* + **Define Expectations:** Set clear, measurable, achievable, and time-constrained goals.
  + **Leadership Role:** Primarily led by leadership but involves all team members.
  + **Example:** Instead of “best meeting ever,” aim for “determine the way forward on Project X in the next 15 minutes.”

**A - Adopt Lessons from the Past**

* + **Learn from Experience:** Capture both successful and unsuccessful outcomes to avoid repeating mistakes.
  + **Documentation:** Create an easily shareable document summarizing key lessons learned.
  + **Key Questions to Address:**
    - Why did we succeed?
    - What actions led to that success?
    - Why did we fail?
    - What were the root causes of failure or success?

**G - Generate from the Target Backwards**

* **Approach:** Start with the desired end state and work backwards to maintain focus on mission objectives.
* **Key Benefits:**
  + Promotes diversity of thought and engagement from all team members.
  + Helps identify potential issues that a linear planning approach might miss.
  + Facilitates a mental visualization of success before execution begins.
* **Key Tasks:** Assign responsibilities clearly during this phase, with a focus on “who does what and when.”
* **Contingency Planning:** Begin considering potential challenges early on.

**L - Laying out Contingencies**

* **Definition:** Contingencies are any deviations from the ideal plan, such as delays or resource constraints.
* **Planning Focus:**
  + Prioritize the most likely negative forces rather than improbable events.
  + Encourage creativity and brainstorming for innovative solutions to mitigate impacts.
* **Key Emphasis:**
  + Avoid “best-case” scenarios; plan for realistic challenges.
  + Contingency planning should be multi-layered, addressing chains of events rather than isolated incidents.

**E - Evaluate from the Enemy’s Perspective**

* **Red Teaming:** Actively identify potential flaws in the plan to foster accountability and proactive thinking.
* **Team Involvement:**
  + Solicit input from all members to find gaps and vulnerabilities.
  + Encourage critical examination of the plan to enhance its robustness.
* **Objective:** Approach planning from the perspective of a “disruptor” to identify and mitigate potential disruptions.

**Summary of the E.A.G.L.E. Planning Model**

* **Importance:** The E.A.G.L.E. process is integral to debriefing and informs future planning iterations.
* **Cycle of Improvement:** It is a continuous cycle that enhances team performance and leadership accountability.
* **Versatility:** Applicable to all levels of business planning, from large projects to minor tasks.
* **Outcome:** Increased probability of success and improved execution across team operations.

**Core Values of the Debrief**

* **Purpose:**
  + Understand and lead impactful debriefs.
  + Foster a culture of respectful accountability and psychological safety.
* **Importance of Leadership:**
  + Mature, secure, and professional leaders enhance Top Gun Teamwork effectiveness.
  + Consistent application of Debrief Core Values elevates team performance.
* **Definition of Core Values:**
  + Foundational principles that guide organizational behavior.
  + Implicit values exist even if not explicitly stated.
* **Impact of Core Values:**
  + Each debrief should embody these values for optimal trust, accountability, and performance.
  + Facilitators must establish a pro-core value environment through consistent application.
* **Consequences of Neglect:**
  + Failing to apply core values hinders improvement and fosters toxic culture.

**Debrief Core Values Overview**

1. **Vulnerability:**
   * Open to the same performance standards; no favorites.
   * Essential for building and maintaining trust.
   * Embrace mistakes and share responsibility for outcomes.
2. **Humility:**
   * Equality among all participants; roles and ranks are irrelevant.
   * Encourages accountability and continuous improvement.
   * Leaders set the example by prioritizing team success over personal pride.
3. **Ownership:**
   * Leaders take full accountability for actions and results.
   * Essential for fostering positive organizational culture and outcomes.
4. **Emotional Intelligence (EQ):**
   * Crucial for effective debriefing; consists of:
     + **Self-Awareness:** Recognizing one's emotions.
     + **Self-Management:** Controlling emotional reactions.
     + **Social Awareness:** Understanding others' emotions.
     + **Relationship Management:** Navigating interactions successfully.
5. **Collaboration:**
   * Unique perspectives contribute to a complete understanding.
   * Avoid imposing views; instead, foster diverse input for a richer dialogue.
6. **Empathy:**
   * Leaders should recognize the emotional toll of debriefs.
   * Employ empathy to create a supportive atmosphere and facilitate honest communication.

**Exercising Debrief Core Values**

* **Leadership Improvement**: Leaders must change their behaviors to enhance performance; expecting change without action is unrealistic.
* **Team Dynamics**: Top Gun Teamwork fosters necessary changes in leaders and team members, emphasizing mutual respect and continuous improvement.
* **Challenges of Change**: Inward and outward changes can be difficult, leading to blame or negative feelings. A down team tends to stay down.
* **TGT Methodology**: The Top Gun Teamwork framework promotes positive change through structured methods, aiding teams in overcoming challenges.

**Debrief Core Values Summary**

* **Impact of Debriefs**: Utilizing Debrief Core Values leads to significant improvements in team culture and performance.
* **Holistic Integration**: Including these values throughout the Team Life Cycle enhances organizational outcomes.
* **Next Steps**: Apply Debrief Core Values in the F4 Debrief for focused impact.

**The F4 Debrief**

* **Accountability and Safety**: Building an accountable leadership environment requires time and a focused process, not rushed implementation.
* **Foundational Principles**: Use VMax Group's principles and Top Gun Teamwork for effective leadership and psychological safety.

**Essential Elements for Debrief**

1. **Mission**: Clearly articulate overarching and individual missions for effective debriefing.
2. **Objectives**: Define objectives to clarify desired outcomes, improving focus during debriefs.
3. **Plan**: Establish a solid plan to achieve the mission and objectives, guiding the debrief process.

* **Communication**: Ensure these elements are easily communicated during every debrief.
* **Anticipation for Debrief**: Secure leaders view debriefs as opportunities for growth and solution discovery.

**The F4 Steps Overview**

1. **Facts**: Most crucial and time-consuming step, establishing "ground truth" through collaborative fact-gathering.
   * **Who, What, When**: Focus on individual recollections and situational awareness.
   * **Documentation**: Ensure all facts are recorded accurately, fostering an environment of accountability and psychological safety.
   * **Tone and Questions**: Maintain a respectful tone and ask clarifying questions to promote open sharing.
   * **Gratitude**: Appreciate honest contributions to enhance the debrief experience.

**Focus**

* **Purpose**: Narrow the conversation to essential aspects to maximize time efficiency.
* **Importance**:
  + No organization can cover every detail in every mission.
  + Focus creates efficiencies in the debriefing process.
* **Art & Science of Focus**:
  + **Art**: Identify facts that significantly impacted the mission.
  + **Science**: Align facts chronologically and pinpoint deviations from the plan.
* **Key Technique**: Use “why” questions to delve into performance, e.g.,
  + “Why did we sell less/more than planned this week?”
* **Performance Assessment**:
  + Evaluate individual and team performance against objectives.
  + Celebrate successes and analyze under-performance.
* **Time Management**: Aim for focus to be the quickest step; establish consensus on the focal points.

**Framing**

* **Goal**: Transition to the final phase, resolving a way forward for improved outcomes.
* **Root Cause Analysis (RCA)**:
  + RCA should be conducted with the Debrief Core Values to foster psychological safety.
  + Focus on identifying the true root cause, which often lies further back in the chain of events.
* **Techniques**:
  + Utilize the “5 Whys” method to explore deeper causes of outcomes.
* **Avoid Blame**: Emphasize positive framing to foster a constructive environment.
* **Master Framing**: Great leaders reframe negative experiences into learning opportunities, focusing on future success.

**Way Forward**

* **Objective**: Derive actionable recommendations for future performance.
* **Documentation**:
  + Record changes needed to deter failure and strategies to emulate success.
  + Document tough calls and the rationale behind them.
* **Time Allocation**: Similar duration to the focus step (about 10% of total debrief time).
* **Lessons Learned**: Capture insights in a shared format for accessibility to all team members.

**F4 Debrief Summary**

* **Impact**: Consistent debriefing can increase team performance by 20-25%.
* **Implementation**: Effective use of the F4 debrief can yield even greater improvements.
* **Objective:** Equip facilitators to lead and explain the debrief process effectively.

**Conclusions & Takeaways**

* **Certification Goal**: Prepare you as a Top Gun Teamwork Facilitator.
* **Role Importance**: Foster leader accountability, cross-team trust, and high performance.
* **Next Steps**: Prepare for the Certification Test and further enhance your facilitation effectiveness.