

# Defining Our Value and Our Values: An examination of genetic counselors' self-perceptions of professional and personal contributions for the development of a team mission statement and charter



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## Background

- Contracting, i.e. establishing rapport and building mutually agreed-upon goals, is an essential component of the genetic counseling process.
- Development of Team Charters and Mission Statements has been shown to serve as a method of building rapport, setting expectations, and contracting in the professional setting with colleagues.
- Limited research exists on the self-perception of genetic counselors’ value and impact within a large team setting. We aimed to establish individual and collective perceptions among our team of 55 board-certified, licensed genetic counselors who provide pre- and post-test education to patients by phone.

## Methods

- Six senior members of the team were selected to serve on a Team Charter Committee, and developed a team workshop run via the Microsoft Teams videoconferencing platform.
- During the workshop, team members were divided randomly into three breakout groups. Each room was assigned two specific prompts and allowed 15 minutes for each to brainstorm, discuss, and document responses (**Table 1**). Participants responded to prompts within each category and provided real-time feedback and answers via an interactive Miro Board.
- Responses were collected, transcribed and quantified using Excel, and processed via a word cloud generator. Key themes were then used to create a formal Team Charter and Mission Statement.

Table 1. Breakout Groups and Prompt Questions

	Breakout 1: Who is the Patient Education Team?	Breakout 2: What is our culture? What are our responsibilities?
Room 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To each other?</li><li>To other Myriad teams?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Describe our PE Team culture in 3 words.</li><li>What are our responsibilities as a team, to Myriad?</li></ul>
Room 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To our pre-test patients?</li><li>To our post-test patients?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Describe Myriad corporate culture in 3 words.</li><li>How do we contribute to where Myriad is headed?</li></ul>
Room 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To our pre-test ordering providers?</li><li>To our post-test providers?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What are our responsibilities as individual team members?</li><li>How do we approach our work and meet our responsibilities?</li></ul>

## Results

- The 55 team members provided a total of 330 individual responses, including 162 across all prompts in the “Who We Are” category and 168 across all prompts in the “Culture and Responsibilities” category.
- Overwhelmingly, responses indicated that our team members view themselves and their responsibilities in direct connection with their patients and patient care. “Patients” was the most frequently used word (43/330) (**Figure 1**).

- Questionnaire responses illuminated the most agreed-upon values held by our team, and were used to construct our team mission statement and value pillars (**Figure 3**).

Figure 1. Word Cloud Results From Discussion Prompts

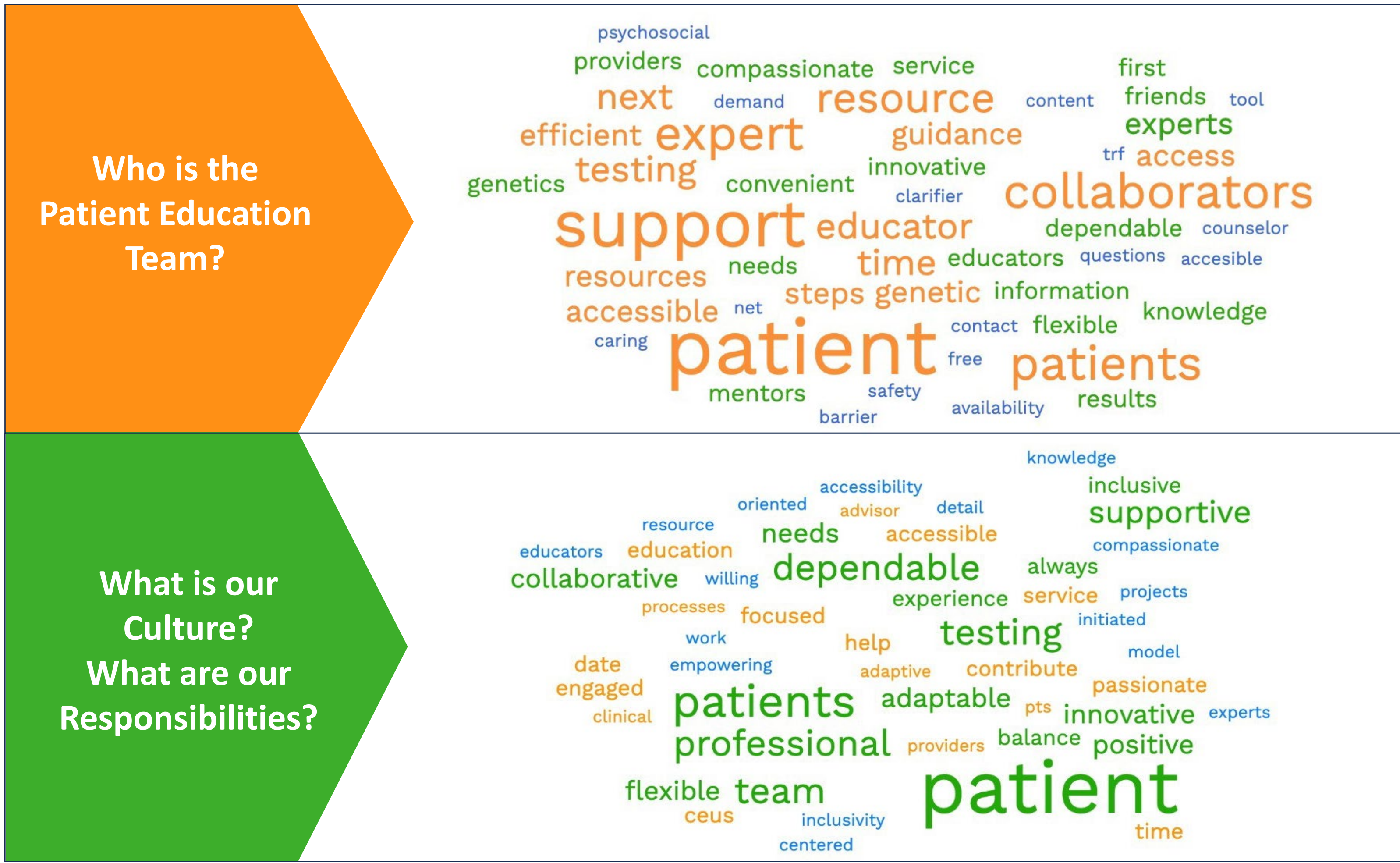


Figure 2. Frequently Used Adjectives

- Adjectives frequently used to represent team members’ perceptions of themselves and their work are presented in **Figure 2**.

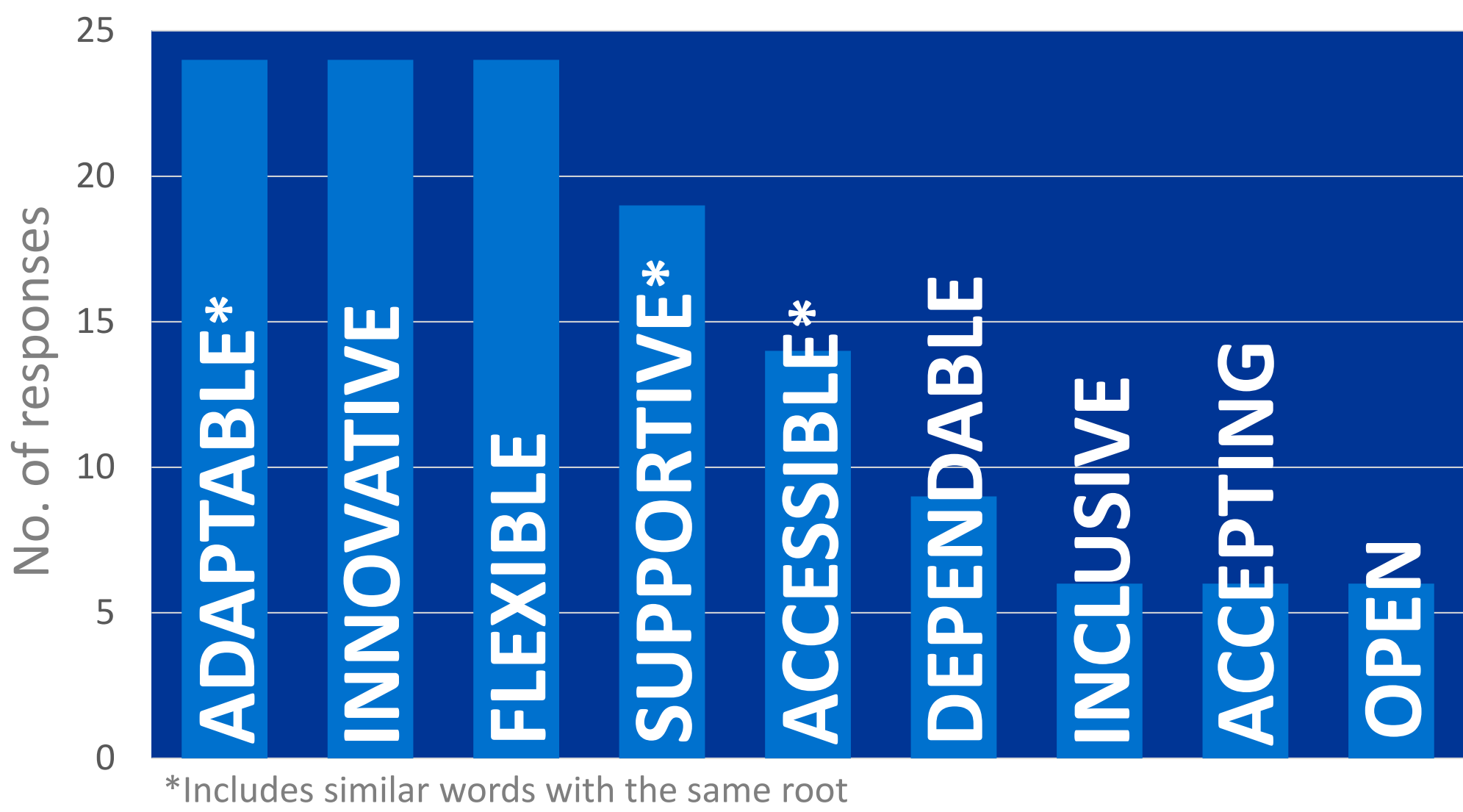


Figure 3. Patient Education Team Mission Statement and Pillars

**Mission Statement**

We are a team of industry-leading genetic counselors who empower patients to make informed healthcare decisions by providing highly accessible education and counseling.

**Pillars**

**Collaborative**

Create a collaborative and supportive environment for genetic counselors

**Patient Centered**

Utilize our clinical expertise to help patients improve their personal and family health through the use of genetic information

**Dependable**

Adapt and partner with others at Myriad to ensure continuity of patient experience and patient care

## Conclusions

- Patients remain the top priority and purpose in our individual and collective daily work.
- As a remote team, collaborating to construct guidelines and expectations for our work together serves to build camaraderie among colleagues that share emotional but not physical space.
- To ensure our focus is maintained on the priorities that best match our vision for the Patient Education Team, we have integrated the Team Charter in the following ways:
  - Pillars infographic included in our Weekly Updates email, sent to the team every Friday.
  - Pillars have become the basis for our team awards, given monthly.
  - Applied to interview discussion points, as a means of illustrating the culture and values of our team to potential candidates.
  - A cultural compass and reference point for prioritizing new projects and outside requests from other teams and customers.
- Our analysis may serve as a model for other groups on how to align teams of genetic counselors, by crystallizing values and priorities and creating a collective focus on patient wellbeing.