

Facilitating Group Development

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*Quincy D. Spencer, Director
First Year Experience Programs*

**What is a
GROUP?**

- “...two or more people who share a common definition and evaluation of themselves and behave in accordance with such a definition” (Vaughan & Hogg, 2002, p. 200)

- A collection of people who interact with one another, accept rights and obligations as members and who share a common identity.

- Formal Social Structure
- Face-to-Face Interaction
- 2 or more persons
- Common Fate

**Why is Group
Development
important?**

Tuckman's Stages of Group Development

Forming

Storming

Norming

Performing

Adjourning

Forming

- Group Members learn about each other and the task at hand. Indicators of this stage might include:
 - Unclear objectives
 - Uncommitted members
 - Confusion
 - Low morale
 - Hidden feelings
 - Poor listening, etc.

Storming

- As group members continue to work, they will engage each other in arguments about the structure of the group which often are significantly emotional and illustrate a struggle for status in the group. These activities mark the storming phase:

- Lack of cohesion
- Subjectivity
- Hidden agendas
- Conflicts
- Confrontation
- Volatility
- Resentment
- Anger
- Inconsistency
- Failure

Norming

- Group Members establish implicit or explicit rules about how they will achieve their goal. They address the types of communication that will or will not help with the task. Indicators include:
 - Questioning performance
 - Reviewing/clarify objective
 - Changing/confirming roles
 - Opening risky issues
 - Assertiveness
 - Listening
 - Testing new ground
 - Identifying strengths and weaknesses

Performing

- Group reach a conclusion and implement the solution to their issue. Indicators include:
 - Creativity
 - Initiative
 - Flexibility
 - Open relationships
 - Pride
 - Concern for others
 - Learning
 - Confidence
 - High morale
 - Success

Adjourning

- Involves the termination of task behaviors and disengagement from relationships. A planned conclusion usually includes recognition for participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say person goodbyes.

Adapted from: Tuckman, B.(1965) Developmental Sequence in Small Groups . Psychological Bulletin, 63 384-399.

Tuckman, B. & Jensen, M. (1977) Stages of Small Group Development. Group and Organizational Studies, 2, 419-426.

Roles that Individuals Play

- Task-Oriented Roles

Initiator – contributor Energizer

Opinion giver

Recorder

- Social Roles

Encourager

Compromiser

Harmonizer

Follower

- Individualistic Roles

Aggressor

Dominator

Help Seeker

Blocker

What is a Facilitator?

A FACILITATOR

- *encourages participation*
- *maintains focus on the task*
- *helps build small agreements*
- *manages this process of decision making (involving a group)*
- *sometimes this is in the context of an educational session; at other times it is in the context of a working meeting*

Processing in a Small Group

Engage Participants in Discussion:

- Ask open ended questions
- Round Robin: "Let's hear from everyone."
- "What do the rest of you think about that?"
- Emphasize responsibility of each person as a group member. Do not allow someone to withdraw from the group

Reflect on Group Process.

- "I have noticed there seems to be a lot of tension in the group today. Let's talk about that."

Modeling: demonstrate a behavior or skill, but be careful to remember that you are not part of the group

Facilitators Role and Responsibilities in a Small Group

What it is NOT:

- You are not part of the group: be careful about offering opinions. Teaching, giving advise, dictating direction, etc., answer questions with questions.
- The group is not a class and you are not its teacher!! Participants will push to that role because it is SAFE for them. Be careful not to use the group time to re-teach the days topic.
- You are not a problem solver—let them process and resolve their own problems.
- Do not dominate the group discussion—your input should be minimal!

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- Reflect on Group Process.
 - "I have noticed there seems to be a lot of tension in the group today. Let's talk about that."
- Modeling: demonstrate a behavior or skill, but be careful to remember that you are not part of the group

Communication Techniques

Ask open ended questions: What and How

Non Verbal Communication

- Facilitation requires a great deal of concentration. Lean in, make eye contact, give them your attention, don't take notes.

Minimal encouragers

- "Tell me more about that."
- "What does the rest of the group think about that."
- Reflection / Observation: "everyone seems disengaged"
- Paraphrasing / Perception check
- "So what you are saying is Is that right?"

Reframing

- Conflict is a good thing as long as respect is maintained
- Disagreement is a chance for more thorough discussion

Summarizing

Necessary Conditions for Change in Members of a Small Group

Members must experience group issues that resonate with their personal concerns—otherwise the group has no meaning to them.

Members must participate without escaping anxiety

- Don't let them stay safe
- One or more of the group members will attempt to restrict the solution in order to stay safe or maintain harmony in the group

Must Learn Alternative (new) solutions

- Growth isn't going to happen if they just do the same old thing

Safety vs. Anxiety; Restrictive Solutions vs. Enabling Solutions

- Members who do not experience this dilemma will not grow or change
- How much anxiety can you (the facilitator) tolerate????

You are part of the system

- You might end up supporting their avoidance of an issue b/c you feel safer. You cannot take a group where you are not ready to go!

Facilitators Role and Responsibilities in a Small Group

What it is:

- “Facilitation helps create conditions which encourage diverse participants to freely interact on a basis of mutual respect and shared concerns with each being able to participate actively in discussions”
- Orchestrate the group process.
- Create a safe environment for sharing (but don't let them stay safe)
- Assist in establishing ground rules, boundaries & expectations (not yours, but theirs!!)
- Engage participants in discussion and reflection
- Model skills and behaviors

Key Points

- What is the goal of the Group?
- Group Development is a PROCESS
- Awareness / Group Stage
- Every Group is Different
- Roles of Individuals in the Group
- Comfortable in role as the Facilitator
- Proper Communication
- Change is the Ultimate Goal