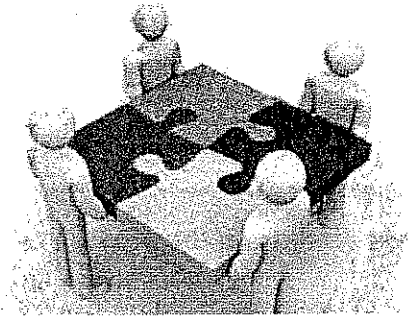


Group Dynamics

Curriculum by Tobias Spanier

Group dynamics refers to the interactions operating within a group which determine the character, development and success of the group.

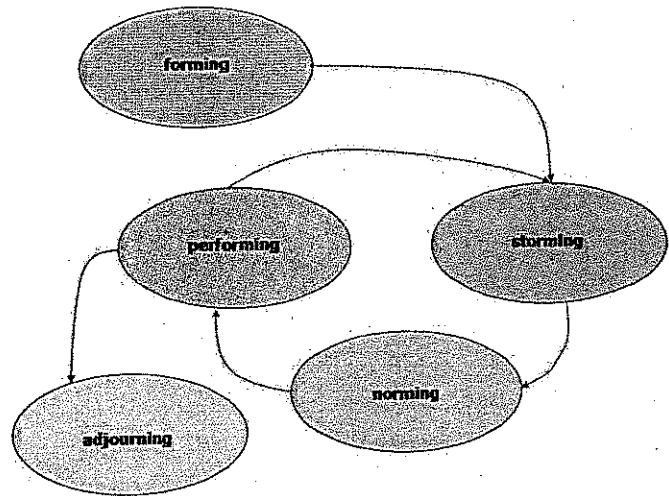


Stages of Group Development

Studies of group development over the past three decades have identified that most groups have predictable development. One model that is useful for leaders and facilitators is the Bruce Tuckman Model which refers to the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Most groups progress through these stages. Each stage builds on the previous stage and prepares the group for performing.

It is important to remember some cautions regarding the idea of group development:

- Some recent studies suggest that groups may manifest behaviors from several stages at once.
- Groups may return to earlier stages when some event takes place that disturbs the equilibrium of the group (e.g., new group members, changing of the group's goals or procedures).
- Many groups get stuck in one stage. Research in Fortune 500 companies shows, for example, that less than 30 percent of teams reach the performing stage.
- Reaching the performing stage requires constant attention to maintenance (internal group processes) as well as task (the content or production) functions.



Tuckman Model of Group Development Overview of Model

- Stage 1 – **FORMING**
Forming the group; setting ground rules; finding similarities.
- Stage 2 – **STORMING**
Dealing with issues of power and control; surfacing differences.
- Stage 3 – **NORMING**
Managing group conflict; finding group norms; resurfacing similarities.
- Stage 4 – **PERFORMING**
Functioning as an effective group.
- Stage 5 – **ADJOURNING**
Finding closure.

Information on Group Stages

Stage 1 - FORMING

Typical Behaviors:	Implications for team leaders and facilitators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The polite stage; focus on getting acquainted and feeling comfortable. ▪ Conflict is low, suppressed; need for approval high. ▪ Verbal members tend to dominate. ▪ Ability to accomplish group tasks and stay focused is low. ▪ Little listening; high distortion of what is heard. ▪ Watchful; guarded; personal feelings kept hidden. ▪ Much giving of/asking for information and data. ▪ Some inclusion/exclusion issues with "new" and "old" group members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use climate-setting activities to break the ice. ▪ Help group members identify and prioritize their goals. ▪ Use brainstorming processes to surface hopes, fears, and expectations of members. ▪ Identify group-directed procedures and establish ground rules. ▪ Have everyone identify the roles needed and begin defining roles and responsibilities. ▪ Help the groups set norms for communicating, resolving conflicts, and presenting ideas. ▪ Have the group reflect on what worked well in the group and what didn't.

Stage 2 - STORMING

Typical Behaviors:	Implications for team leaders and facilitators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subgroups and individuals attempt to influence ideas, values, and opinions. ▪ Competition for attention, recognition, and influence. ▪ People confront each other; interpersonal conflict. ▪ Polarization; lack of shared vision. ▪ Members may opt out and/or cliques/alliances form. ▪ Unsolicited comments; opinions. ▪ Sense of feeling struck; frustrated. ▪ Emotional reaction to task or misperceptions about task. ▪ Process issues discussed outside of meeting. ▪ Quick fix: address symptoms, skirt problems. ▪ Power inequities, struggle as members "jockey for position." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to surface underlying issues and legitimate concerns; encourage the expression of thoughts and feelings. ▪ Use collaborative interventions (e.g., brainstorming, consensus building) and work on defining roles to support collaborative teamwork. ▪ Form subtask/problem teams that cut across subgroup boundaries. ▪ Focus on major issues with the entire group. ▪ Model reflective listening and coach members on the skills. ▪ Reinforce respectful listening and communications during group discussion. ▪ Expect conflict. Encourage group members to express their frustrations and anxieties, and then focus on defining and organizing tasks.

Stage 3 – NORMING

Typical Behaviors:	Implications for team leaders and facilitators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authority/leadership issues discussed and resolved. ▪ Issues, not people, confronted. ▪ Cohesion among group members begins; subgroups disappear. ▪ Members actively listen to each other. ▪ Appreciation and acceptance of alternative points of view. ▪ Risky issues/process issues brought up in meetings. ▪ Ability to remain focused on task at hand. ▪ Quiet people now contributing more in the group. ▪ Values and assumptions begin to get discovered and discussed. ▪ Relevant questions are asked. ▪ Air of complacency may develop. ▪ Individuals move beyond blame to responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the “hidden” norms and invite the group to evaluate them or set new norms. ▪ Assist the group to develop a positive group identity via teambuilding activities. ▪ Challenge the boundaries of the group: bring in outsiders and /or newcomers periodically. ▪ Redefine or reestablish goals by focusing on desired results. ▪ Coach the group to use problem-solving methods wisely (e.g., nominal group, data dump). ▪ Use consensus-building interventions and explore areas of actual difference. ▪ Encourage open communication when members “close up” and appear reluctant to share. ▪ Invite input when people are reluctant to address issues that might result in conflict.

Stage 4 – PERFORMING

Typical Behaviors:	Implications for team leaders and facilitators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members try new behaviors and accept new ideas. ▪ Members relate with honesty, respect, authenticity. ▪ Problems and difficult issues are dealt with, handled creatively. ▪ Diversity is affirmed and welcomed. ▪ Member resourcefulness is utilized to energize each other. ▪ Decision-making process to be used is understood. ▪ Frequent review of process issues. ▪ Clarity on how members experience each other. ▪ Outside help/resources welcomed. ▪ Differences bridged with integrity. ▪ Commitment to work toward common goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use problem-solving and consensus-building processes to facilitate group work. ▪ Do nothing, join in and comment on what’s going well. ▪ Experiment with group structures and explore process improvements. ▪ Help the group critique itself. Your role as leader becomes less active. ▪ Arrange appropriate ceremonies/rituals for celebration of accomplishments. ▪ Use or suggest inclusion activities that give new members a sense of acceptance.

Stage 5 – ADJOURNING

Typical Behaviors.	Implications for team leaders and facilitators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The sense of the group is that the work is done.▪ May be apprehension over the impending loss of group identity and friendships.▪ Cleaning up the group's undone tasks and removing symbols of the group.▪ Evaluating the results and producing final reports.▪ Saying goodbye. Recognizing and acknowledging the contributions of group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish closing procedures with the group.▪ Help design closing ritual or ceremonies.▪ Discuss endings with members and encourage them to talk about how they feel.▪ Provide a vehicle for people to say what they appreciate about each other.▪ End with a celebration that honors the group and its members.