

FACILITATING THE GROUP

EXERCISE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS AND SLIDES

Group Stages

A Review

Forming

- Deal with issues of trust.
- Lack awareness of group purpose.
- Don't know what to expect.
- Face new social situations.
- Display discomfort and apprehension; will be cautious!

Storming

- Deal with the issue of conflict.
- React to what has to be done.
- Question authority.
- Feel increasingly comfortable being themselves.
- Express concerns and frustrations more openly.
- Feel more free to exchange ideas.
- Learn to deal with differences in order to work together and to meet goals.
- Exhibit power struggles to obtain influence.

Norming

- Norms of behavior are developed.
- Order and group cohesiveness form.
- Begin to identify with the group.
- Develop acceptable ways to complete assignments, resolve differences, make decisions and solve problems.
- Shift from power struggles to affiliation.
- Transfer from confusion to clarity.
- Change from personal advantage to group success.
- Move from detachment to involvement.

Performing

- The “payoff” stage.
- Focus their energies on group performance.
- Begin to complete tasks and solve problems together.
- Take the initiative and achieve results.
- Morale will go up.
- Have positive feelings about each other and their accomplishments as a team.

Transforming

- The “change” stage.
- Express some suspicion and fear about the team situation in the face of change.
- Closely watch other team members’ behaviors for similarities and differences.
- Members may be nervous, apprehensive, asking how the group should interpret and respond to change.
- Sadness at the conclusion of a task or when members leave the team.
- Question communication, how changing roles will influence current team members and how these implications will be handled.
- Excitement about the new challenge.
- Prepare to do it again.
- Revert to the characteristics described in the forming stage.

Group Stages –Reducing Group Uncertainty or Conflict and Promoting Group Success

Stage	The facilitator can reduce uncertainty in each stage by:	How can a facilitator do that?
Forming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining the purpose of the group and its goals. • Providing time for questions. • Allowing time for members to become acquainted. • Modeling expected behaviors. 	
Storming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing all points of view. • Acknowledging conflict as an opportunity for improvement. • Adhering to core values, such as truth, trust and respect. • Maintaining democratic and humanistic ideals. 	
Norming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling listening skills • Fostering an atmosphere of trust. • Teaching and facilitating consensus. • Providing team-centered learning. 	
Performing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being prepared for temporary setbacks. • Focusing on the task accomplishments and interpersonal support. • Providing feedback on the work of the group. • Promoting and representing the group. 	

Stage	The facilitator can reduce uncertainty in each stage by:	How can a facilitator do that?
Transforming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having an icebreaker to get people to learn about each other. • Affirming that what is going on within the group is ok. • Recapping where the group is and where they are going. • Summarizing current situations. • Brainstorming to bring in new ideas. • Including newcomers or new ideas. 	

Task Roles

These roles help to get the job done. The motive behind individuals in these roles is to determine what it takes to get the job done.

Task Roles	Characteristic	Why helps the group	Why hinders the group	Facilitator: How to control
Initiator	Starts things off; or helps change direction. Initially often the leader.			
Clarifier	Takes individual contributions and clarifies them. Encourages people to be specific.			
Information Giver	Gives or volunteers certain information. Seeks clarification of suggestions based on facts relevant to the problem.			
Questioner	Asks fundamental questions about the task. Has the ability to step back from the task and challenge assumptions.			
Summarizer	Reevaluates the situation and summarizes the group's thoughts and end product. Provides breathing space.			
Opinion Giver	States belief about alternative suggestions. Focuses on values rather than facts.			

Maintenance Roles

These roles provide the 'oil' for the machinery. Individuals in these roles consider the needs of others. They want to make sure everyone is included

Maintenance Roles	Characteristic	Why helps the group	Why hinders the group	Facilitator: How to control
Encourager	Praises good points, exhibits acceptance and group solidarity.			
Harmonizer	Attempts to mediate differences among members or their points of view and seeks to reconcile differences. Reduces conflict and tension.			
Supporter	Provides warmth for individuals by agreeing with their ideas. Provides non-verbal support.			
Gatekeeper	Keeps communication open. Suggests ways to share information with others.			
Compromiser	Is willing to compromise or yield personal viewpoints, or admit an error.			
Observer	Keeps records of the group processes. Brings data into the discussion as is seen pertinent.			

Group Personalities

Non-participant

This person will not freely participate in discussions. The motivation might be indifference, inferiority, confusion (about the issues or process) or a feeling of superiority.

Facilitator Tips: Be patient. Use a warm-up exercise and give this person a role. Ask direct questions on topics you know he/she has expertise or ask him/her to help clarify an issue. Ask some *safe* things early in the session to get involvement.

Call the person by name. Respond to body language. (Is there a fear of speaking, resentment at being there, or boredom?) Focus your attention directly on him/her to create the time and space needed to answer. Validate. Commend the participation when it occurs. Talk to the person during breaks or after the session, casually, to help him/her become comfortable.

Monopolizer

This individual comments too frequently and tends to dominate discussions. He/she also tends to be the first to speak on each issue.

Facilitator Tips: Establish procedures to limit this person's discussion opportunities. Target questions to other members of the group by name. Use nonverbal signal (e.g. no direct eye contact) to focus on another part of the meeting room or recognize others. Do not assign leadership roles to this person. Summarize quickly and then move on. Call names to get attention. Interrupt, if the behavior continues. Ask for input from those who have not been heard from.

Rambler

This individual will often get off track in his/her remarks and uses low-probability exceptions or far-fetched examples to make a point. He/she doesn't focus and instead gives off-base types of examples.

Facilitator Tips: Ask for the "short" version. When he/she pauses, move on to the next person or topic. Do not assign a leadership role to this person. Consider making this individual a scribe or recorder, thus neutralizing his/her remarks. Ask if you may put this topic on a list that the group can come back to later if time permits. Return to the scheduled topic. You might also suggest that those who would like to continue this discussion do so at the break or during lunch.

Inarticulate Person

This person has ideas but has problems putting the ideas into words.

Facilitator Tips: Encourage the person to speak. Exhibit extra patience when he/she does speak. Ask him/her for permission to help in phrasing or rephrasing thoughts.

Homesteader

A person who takes an initial position and is highly reluctant to budge or consider other viable alternatives.

Facilitator Tips: Apply “hints” on consensus building. Overwhelm him/her with facts. Enlist support of the group. Give this person a graceful way out with an alternative.

Ideal Person

This person has good ideas and expresses them freely at appropriate times. Often he/she is very congenial and works well with others. You will find this person smiles and laughs easily, even at him/herself.

Facilitator Tips: Acknowledge this person frequently. Always learn from him/her.

Know It All

This person appears as the expert, wants constant attention and often argues with people.

Facilitator Tips: Generalize. “What works in one situation or with one person may not work with another.” Be well prepared for the topic under discussion. Listen to and paraphrase what is said. Don’t challenge, ask questions which may lead him/her to see his/her errors. Praise his/her ability. Focus on solutions. Ask other group members to comment on what they heard Redirect focus away from the Know-It-All. Have the person summarize his/her thoughts and record them.

Gives False Information

This person could give false information in a confident, “this is right” fashion so it is easily believed. This person could be ignorant of the facts but still delivers inaccuracies into the group discussion.

Facilitator Tips: Summarize and ask for group input: “What do the rest of you think about this? Have others heard of this?” Ask members to recheck their sources. Check your resources and clarify at the next session.

Challenges Facilitator/Doubting Thomas

This person attacks and criticizes, usually indirectly, masking his/her aggression by using humor or saying things under the breath.

Facilitator Tips: Generalize. Remind the group that there is no “one way”. Recognize the frustration, challenges and complexity of working with groups. Use “I” statements. Address behavior openly, asking the person why he/she said that. Ask others if they agree with the criticism. Don't let him/her hide behind humor. Address sniping each time it occurs, until it stops.

Rude Behavior (laughing, side conversations, interrupting)

This person distracts by holding side conversations. This person interrupts the person speaking.

Facilitator Tips: Review ground rules. Invite back into conversation. Ask another member to repeat what he/she said, because you are not sure everyone was able to hear. Say, “We all need to be on the same topic in one discussion”.

Cheerleader

This is the person who encourages and celebrates all of the individual or group contributions.

Facilitator Tips: Acknowledge the person's positive input and show appropriate appreciation. Keep the group work on track and do not allow the positive input to mask problems that the group needs to address.

Demands “The” Answer

This person wants absolute answers and definitions.

Facilitator Tips: Generalize. State that there may be many answers. Invite others to express opinions. Remind the group that facilitators are not experts. Acknowledge his/her need for absolute answers and definitions. State what you're prepared to give. Ask them to honor your work or style preferences just as you accept their preferences.

Joker

This person allows the group to let off steam. He or she offers levity and comic relief during the group process.

Facilitator Tips: Prevent the jokes from becoming personal or offensive. Laugh with the group and encourage them to do the same. Move the group along when the humor becomes counterproductive.

Group Anointed Leader

This is the person who emerges as the naturally accepted leader of the group. He or she is the one the group will turn to for decisions and guidance.

Facilitator Tips: Ensure that all group members are allowed to contribute and protect those who may disagree with the "leader". Prevent the leader from taking over the discussion while personally recognizing the position the group has given him/her. Maintain the facilitator role and do not allow this person to undermine your authority.

Supporter

This person provides warmth for individuals. He or she will use phrases like "yes, I think that's a good point", "that was really helpful" etc. He/she will often exhibit non-verbal support.

Facilitator Tips: Express gratitude for contributions. Point out any silent contributions, so the group will appreciate them.

Complainer/Whiner

This person tries to put you on the spot to *fix it*. He or she blames others and never him/herself.

Facilitator Tips: Don't be defensive. Listen and acknowledge, don't argue. Ask questions. Solicit solutions from him/her. Encourage this person to act.

Peacemaker

Soothes hurt feelings of group members, compliments contributions of individuals, protects group members and attempts to downplay conflict within the group.

Facilitator Tips: Use appropriate conflict management skills to manage, rather than ignore conflict in the group and acknowledge the individual's efforts within the group.

Effects of Group Size

Groups come in all shapes and sizes! Will the size of the group effect how you facilitate? Absolutely!

Dyad – Two members of the group or a group of simply two people.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Facilitation Techniques

- Keep it intimate and personal.
- Allow more freedom with timeframes.
- Group can be more autonomous.

Facilitation Challenges

- Don't become a part of the group.
- Be careful not to let the pair go off track.
- Personality challenges are more evident in dyads.

Triad – Three members of the group or a group of three.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Facilitation Techniques

- Keep it intimate and personal.
- Appoint one of the group members as timekeeper.

Facilitation Challenges

- Be careful that one group member doesn't become the "leader".
- Personality challenges increase, as the size of the group increases.
- Quiet members of the group find it more difficult to "hide".

Small Group of 3-5

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Facilitation Techniques

- Establish group norms up front.
- Ensure all members of the group to understand the “end result”.
- Keep the group geographically close (seated together).

Facilitation Challenges

- Possibility of defined group roles and greater personality/behavior challenges.
- Group stages become more evident.

Medium Group of 6-15

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Facilitation Techniques

- “Work the crowd” and cover the entire spectrum of the workgroup.
- Allow the group to bond/build the team.
- Add humor and activities to keep group members positive.

Facilitation Challenges

- Personality/behavior challenges will be the most evident in this sized group.
- Easier for the frustrated or challenged member of the group to “give up”.

Large Group of 15 or more

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Facilitation Techniques

- Visual aids are a must!
- The proper equipment (slides, lavalier, microphone, etc.) is essential.
- Keep the group on track and on time!

Facilitation Challenges

- Keeping them interested will be a challenge.
- Involving the entire group is essential.
- Keeping challenging personalities in check is important.

Can you think of additional techniques and/or challenges that we can add?

Group Barriers: Environmental

Barrier	How could this be a challenge?	What do you do to overcome it?
Classroom Set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhibit group interaction • Distance among students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rearrange room • Use more dyads/triads
Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less attendance, arrive late/leave early • Cause distraction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclement weather plan • Have make-up dates
Noise (inside or outside)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distraction • Not focused • Other group noisy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with facility team • Internal meeting and discuss the number of things going on • Don't have speakers share the same wall
Physical barriers (columns, shadows, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't see • Door placement • Shape of the room (bowling alley) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rearrange room • Limit number of attendees • Uses an alternate location
Furniture/Physical Object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture can't be moved • Wrong table size • Uncomfortable chairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use another location • Rearrange the room • Have the facilitator move around
Environmental Set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of screen/easel • Fixed equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate equipment appropriately • Move what you can • Work around what can't be moved • Use portable equipment
Equipment Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light bulbs • Remote control doesn't work • Batteries in microphone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know facility manager and phone number • Have back up equipment
Facility Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too hot/cold • Room décor not appealing or too busy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know facility manager • Use alternate locations • Address up front
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too dark • Lights flickering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use portable lamps
Acoustics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Echo • Not loud enough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rearrange room • Use microphone