

# 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?
<b>Forming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining the purpose of the group and its goals.</li> <li>• Providing time for questions.</li> <li>• Allowing time for members to become acquainted.</li> <li>• Modeling expected behaviors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Warm-up exercise</i></li> <li>• <i>Establish ground rules</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide an agenda</i></li> <li>• <i>Conduct an icebreaker</i></li> <li>• <i>Clarify roles</i></li> </ul>
<b>Storming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hearing all points of view.</li> <li>• Acknowledging conflict as an opportunity for improvement.</li> <li>• Adhering to core values, such as truth, trust and respect.</li> <li>• Maintaining democratic and humanistic ideals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stay calm and neutral</i></li> <li>• <i>Invite input and feedback</i></li> <li>• <i>Admit conflict and intervene when necessary</i></li> <li>• <i>Encourage communication</i></li> </ul>
<b>Norming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeling listening skills</li> <li>• Fostering an atmosphere of trust.</li> <li>• Teaching and facilitating consensus.</li> <li>• Providing team-centered learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Help solve problems</i></li> <li>• <i>Encourage feedback</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide necessary training</i></li> <li>• <i>Share power with group members</i></li> <li>• <i>Coach and counsel.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Performing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being prepared for temporary setbacks.</li> <li>• Focusing on the task accomplishments and interpersonal support.</li> <li>• Providing feedback on the work of the group.</li> <li>• Promoting and representing the group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rotate duties</i></li> <li>• <i>Offer your expertise</i></li> <li>• <i>Help team celebrate success</i></li> <li>• <i>Build agendas together</i></li> <li>• <i>Act as a resource</i></li> </ul>

<b>Stage</b>	<b>The facilitator can reduce uncertainty in each stage by:</b>	<b>How can a facilitator do that?</b>
<b>Transforming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having an icebreaker to get people to learn about each other.</li> <li>• Affirming that what is going on within the group is ok.</li> <li>• Recapping where the group is and where they are going.</li> <li>• Summarizing current situations.</li> <li>• Brainstorming to bring in new ideas.</li> <li>• Including newcomers or new ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Warm-up exercise</i></li> <li>• <i>Create common goal</i></li> <li>• <i>Encourage participation</i></li> <li>• <i>Clarify roles</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide support</i></li> </ul>

## Task Roles

Task Roles	Characteristic	Why helps the group	Why hinders the group	Facilitator: How to control
<b>Initiator</b>	Starts things off; or helps change direction. Initially often the leader.	<i>Takes responsibility; sets the ground work.</i>	<i>Stifles some people; could go in wrong direction.</i>	<i>Includes the group; monitors direction; gets group consensus</i>
<b>Clarifier</b>	Takes individual contributions and clarifies them. Encourages people to be specific.	<i>Keeps on point and on track.</i>	<i>Annoying; gets caught up in the details.</i>	<i>Rephrases so not to put others off; ensures original intent is still there.</i>
<b>Information Giver</b>	Gives or volunteers certain information. Seeks clarification of suggestions based on facts relevant to the problem.	<i>Informative; factual base. Keeps group on right track.</i>	<i>Annoying; may give wrong information. Not the SME. Can shut down the group.</i>	<i>Ensures information is accurate. Includes SME.</i>
<b>Questioner</b>	Asks fundamental questions about the task.  Has the ability to step back from the task and challenge assumptions.	<i>Prevents Group Think; plays Devil's Advocate; steps back and looks at whole; visionary.</i>	<i>May be too wide ranging; gets group off the topic. Slows things down.</i>	<i>Keeps on task. Monitors questions. Makes sure all participate.</i>
<b>Summarizer</b>	Reevaluates the situation and summarizes the group's thoughts and end product.  Provides breathing space.	<i>Provides clarity and check and balance.</i>	<i>Opinion of one; may miss something; Shuts down other creative thoughts.</i>	<i>Controls the summary; reminds group they may not be there yet. Encourages further discussion.</i>
<b>Opinion Giver</b>	States belief about alternative suggestions.  Focuses on values rather than facts.	<i>Can be productive and factual.</i>	<i>May not be factual; based on personal experience; Shuts down others.</i>	<i>Redirects to get others' opinions.</i>

## Maintenance Roles

Maintenance Roles	Characteristic	Why helps the group	Why hinders the group	Facilitator: How to control
<b>Encourager</b>	Praises good points, exhibits acceptance and group solidarity.	<i>Brings group together, validates team work.</i>	<i>May feel good too soon; sometimes conflict is necessary.</i>	<i>Encourages group participation; validates and gets others' opinions</i>
<b>Harmonizer</b>	Attempts to mediate differences among members or their points of view and seeks to reconcile differences.  Reduces conflict and tension.	<i>Provides positive atmosphere of team. Can reduce tension and calm tense situations.</i>	<i>Sometimes conflict is necessary for group to move forward.</i>	<i>Reminds group that it is ok to disagree; validates all opinions.</i>
<b>Supporter</b>	Provides warmth for individuals by agreeing with their ideas.  Provides non-verbal support.	<i>Validates others. Encourages participation</i>	<i>May validate the wrong idea, response, person, etc.</i>	<i>Validates person; Still needs to redirect the wrong information.</i>
<b>Gatekeeper</b>	Keeps communication open, suggests ways to share information with others.	<i>Can keep the group on task and keeps them focused. Protects conversation monopoly.</i>	<i>Stops others from joining the discussion or stifling others.</i>	<i>Gives permission for more discussion. Takes back control. Re-asserts authority.</i>
<b>Compromiser</b>	Is willing to compromise or yield personal viewpoints, or admit an error.	<i>Doesn't fight; leads by example. Allows others to do the same.</i>	<i>Can cause others to feel that they must compromise as well.</i>	<i>Does a check and makes sure others are true to their own beliefs.</i>
<b>Observer</b>	Keeps records of the group processes. Brings data into the discussion as is seen pertinent.	<i>Speaks out if something is worth noting. Sees big picture. Sees more than the spoken word.</i>	<i>Waiting to bring in own agenda.</i>	<i>Realizes that every person has his/her own agenda; Is aware if person is being honest or not.</i>

## 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:**

*Sharing; trust building; greater opportunity to give input and exchange ideas; get to better know each other*

**Disadvantages:**

*Can get off track easily; limited perspective*

**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:**

*Sharing, trust building greater opportunity to give input; more opportunity to talk and to get to know each other*

**Disadvantages:**

*Can get off track easily; limited perspective; strong personality could dominate*

**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:**

*Sharing; trust building; greater opportunity to give input; more opportunity to talk and get to know each other*

### **Disadvantages:**

*Loses some of the personal one-on-one; strong personality could dominate*

### **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:**

*Individual diversity; variety of opinions and roles*

### **Disadvantages:**

*Smaller groups will form in the larger group; lose ability to bond/connect; easier for some not to participate*

### **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:**

*Want to transfer information; clarify something by answering questions and getting instant feedback*

### **Disadvantages:**

*Participants have less opportunity to speak; not all opinions can be heard; time is severely limited*

### **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?*