

# Groupwork and Team Dynamics

By the end of this session participants will have :

- the beginnings of some frameworks for analyzing how groups function
- a better understanding of their personal strengths and weaknesses as participants in groups
- a framework for analyzing and identifying the stages that groups go through
- an increased awareness of leadership styles
- a tool which can be used to help groups become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses

## Handouts

<a href="#">Group Work – three I’s and Two A’s</a>	g981111a.doc
<a href="#">1-5 rating scale for participation in discussion</a>	g951127c.wpd
<a href="#">Rating group effectiveness</a>	g951128h.wpd
<a href="#">Group interaction analysis</a>	g951127e.wpd
<a href="#">Team Functions</a>	g950526a
<a href="#">How Teams are formed – three models</a>	g970807b.wpd
<a href="#">Stages in the development of groups</a>	g951128f.wpd
<a href="#">Solo Leaders and team leaders</a>	g970620a.wpd
<a href="#">Enhancing group dynamics</a>	g971202c.wpd

## Human Development Stages

Dependent	Independent	Interdependent
Infant	Teenager	Adult

When two upon a journey go, one sees before the other.

Many hands make light work.

Such hath it been – shall be – beneath the sun, The many still must labour for the one.

[Lord Byron – *The Corsair* 1814]

I don’t want any yes-men around me. I want everybody to tell me the truth even if it costs them their jobs. [Samuel Goldwyn]

Families and communities are the ground-level generators and preservers of values and ethical systems. No society can remain vital or even survive without a reasonable base of shared values ... They are generated chiefly in the family, schools, church, and other intimate settings in which people deal with one another face to face. [in Etzioni (1993) p31]

... the twenty-first-century-minded leaders ... will be community grassroots leaders who specialize in and articulate a local and regional vision and will work in national assembly-type organisations where all corners of the ... community are able to come to the table to discuss their needs economically, socially and politically. [Hesselbein et al (1988) p209]

# Group Work - Three I's and Two A's

## *A Quality Rating Scale*

Group work is a key feature of participatory training methods. But there is good group work and bad group work. As a trainer you must be able to tell how well a group is functioning so that you can intervene if necessary to make it more effective. The following table outlines a simple rating system whereby a given group can be rated on a 1-5 scale in terms of three simple characteristics.

	<b>GRADE 1 - Excellent</b>	<b>GRADE 5 - Poor</b>
<b>Inclusion</b>	New members are welcome and encouraged by old members who explain procedures and progress to date etc	New members are viewed with suspicion. Nobody asks for their opinion and nobody listens when they speak
<b>Influence</b>	It is not obvious that there is a 'boss'. Everybody contributes and is interested in what everybody else has to say.	There is an individual or an elite which does all the talking and makes all the decisions. Others just follow along.
<b>Intimacy</b>	People obviously enjoy each others company. There is mutual respect and an openness about sharing feelings.	The atmosphere is stiff and formal with pauses when nobody knows what to say next. No personal feelings are expressed

The same scale can be used on more long standing work groups and in this case the three I's can be supplemented by the two A's.

<b>Attendance</b>	Full attendance at every meeting and people hang around to chat afterwards	Poor attendance record. Get the business over with and leave.
<b>Action</b>	An enthusiasm for trying out new ideas and sharing experiences.	Few new ideas are suggested and even fewer get acted on.

How would you rate the work groups to which you presently belong?

If they get a low score, what could you do to make them better?

# 1-5 Rating Scale for Participation in Discussion

The following rating scale was derived as a summarised and easy to use version of six more specific ones. It is useful in developing awareness of self and others when engaged in group discussion.

---

## **ONE**

- Eager to contribute ideas and comments; alert, attentive.
  - Comments are on topic and based on reading/research as well as on experience.
  - Usually takes notes during the course of the discussion.
  - Stimulated by the ideas of others and builds on what they say.
  - Helps/encourages others to express themselves.
- 

## **TWO**

- Usually willing to contribute ideas and comments.
  - Comments mainly on topic and sometimes based on reading/research as well as on personal experience.
  - Sometimes makes a few notes during the course of the discussion.
  - Listens and sometimes responds to the comments of others.
  - Sometimes helps/encourages others to express themselves.
- 

## **THREE**

- Will sometimes make comments (depending on the topic and if in the mood)
  - Talks without much thought; does not support comments with arguments.
  - Comments based largely on personal experience and not always on topic.
  - Quick to agree with suggestions without critical analysis.
  - Rarely makes notes during the course of discussions.
  - Pays limited attention to the comments of others.
  - Pays no attention to those who have difficulty expressing themselves; intolerant of the opinions of others.
  - Occasionally disruptive.
-

## ***FOUR***

- Will respond to probing but mainly yes or no answers.
  - Comments based on personal experience and rarely on topic.
  - Does not listen; repeats ideas already dealt with; not in tune with the discussion.
  - Pays little attention to the comments of others.
  - Sometimes mocks others who have difficulty expressing themselves; makes fun of the comments of others.
  - Quickly loses interest; usually looks bored.
  - Sometimes engages in off topic chat with others.
  - Sometimes disruptive.
- 

## ***FIVE***

- Hardly ever makes comments - even if asked directly.
  - Often stares out of the window or goes to sleep etc
  - Often engages in off topic chat with others.
  - Often disruptive.
-

# Rating group Effectiveness

poor	1 2 3 4 5	good
<b>A: Goals</b>		
confused; diverse; conflicting; indifferent; little interest		clear to all; shared by all ; all care about the goals; feel involved
<b>B: Participation</b>		
few dominate; some passive; some not listened to; talk at once or interrupt		all get in; all are really listened to
<b>C: Feelings</b>		
unexpected; ignored or criticised		freely expressed; emphatic responses
<b>D: Diagnosis of Group Problems</b>		
jump directly to remedial proposals; treat symptoms rather than basic causes		when problems arise the situation is carefully diagnosed before action is proposed; remedies attack basic causes
<b>E: Leadership</b>		
group needs for leadership not met; group depends too much on single person or on a few persons		as needs for leadership arise various members meet them (distributed leadership); anyone feels free to volunteer as he sees a group need
<b>F: Decisions</b>		
needed decisions don't get made; decisions made by part of the group; others uncommitted		consensus sought and tested; deviates appreciated and used to improve decisions; decisions when made are fully supported
<b>G: Trust</b>		
Members distrust one another; are polite, careful, closed, guarded; they listen superficially but inwardly reject what others say; are afraid to criticise or to be criticised		Members trust one another; they reveal to group what they would be reluctant to expose to others; they respect and use the responses they get; they can freely express negative reactions without fearing reprisal
<b>H: Creativity and Growth</b>		

members and group in a rut; operate routinely; persons stereotyped and rigid in their roles;  
no progress



group flexible; seeks new and better ways; individuals changing and growing; creative; individually supported

# Group Interaction Analysis

When groups are working well contributions build on each other. This is possible when participants contribute to the discussion in appropriate ways. The following eight categories of contribution can be used as an aid to analyzing patterns of group interaction.

*Based On: Rackham N et al (1971) Developing Interactive Skills;  
Wellens Publishing, Northampton*

<b>Seeking Suggestions</b>	This label is used when someone invites others to contribute their, ideas, suggestions or proposals
<b>Suggesting</b>	This can take a number of forms eg "I suggest we do so and so", "Let's do the following", "Shall we do X, Y and Z", "Can I take your idea a stage further?"
<b>Agreeing</b>	This covers all types of supporting or backing up what has just been said. This includes nodding.
<b>Disagreeing</b>	This covers all ways of opposing or withholding support for what has just been said: ie not only an outright disagreement ("No, I can't go along with that.") but also stating a difficulty, whether valid or not: "The snag is that ..." or "We are running short of time again."
<b>Seeking Clarification</b>	Whenever someone asks for a recap or checks that he has understood what was intended eg "Do you mean ...", "What happens if A and B coincide."
<b>Clarifying</b>	Responses to requests for explanations; also spontaneous summaries of a discussion.
<b>Interrupting</b>	Whenever someone beaks in to stop a member from finishing his or her contribution; or when everyone seems to be speaking at once.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	In practice, it is difficult to assess all contributions quickly enough to categorize them, so any unspecified contribution can be put in this category rather than go unrecorded.

The following analysis table set out with the types of contribution down the side and the names of the participants along the top. The observer listens to each contribution being made during the discussion and puts a tally mark in the appropriate box. Afterwards the results can be shared either with each individual on a one-to-one basis or as a report back to the group.

---

## Group interaction analysis sheet



	Participants			
	Anne	Brian	Clair	David
Seeking suggestions				
Suggesting				
Agreeing				
Disagreeing				
Seeking Clarification				
Clarifying				
Interrupting				
Miscellaneous				

# Team Functions

*West M A (1994) Effective team work; The British Psychological Society*

Teams, like individuals, have to think about what they do and adapt in ways which are appropriate to their changing circumstances:

- Intelligent scanning of the environment
- Awareness of the functioning of the team
- Flexibility or readiness to change
- Tolerance of ambiguity and difference within the team
- A preparedness to accept uncertainty as change occurs

## How Teams are formed - Three Models

	<b>3 Stage Model</b>	<b>4 Stage Model</b>	<b>6 Stage Model</b>
<b>No Clarity &amp; Much Squabbling</b>	<b>Chaotic Stage</b>	<b>Forming Storming</b>	<b>Orientation Deliberation Conflict</b>
<b>Clarity Stiff Formality</b>	<b>Formal Stage</b>	<b>Norming</b>	<b>Emergence Trust</b>
<b>Clarity Relaxed Functionality</b>	<b>Skillful Stage</b>	<b>Performing</b>	<b>Reinforcement</b>

# Stages in the Development of Groups

Groups mature and develop. Like individuals they have a fairly clearly defined growth cycle. This has been categorized as having four successive stages

## 1. Forming

The group is not yet a group but a set of individuals. This stage is characterised by talk about the purpose of the group, the definition and the title of the group, its composition, leadership pattern, and life-span. At this stage, each individual tends to want to establish his personal identity within the group, making some individual impression.

## 2. Storming

Most groups go through a conflict stage when the preliminary, and often false, consensus on purposes, on leadership and other roles, on norms of behaviour and work, is challenged and re-established. At this stage a lot of personal agendas are revealed and a certain amount of interpersonal hostility is generated. If successfully handled this period of storming leads to a new and more realistic setting of objectives, procedures and norms. This stage is particularly important for testing the norms of trust in the group.

## 3. Norming

The group needs to establish norms and practices. When and how it should work, how it should take decisions, what type of behaviour, what level of work, what degree of openness, trust and confidence is appropriate. At this stage there will be a lot of tentative experimentation by individuals to test the temperature of the group and to measure the appropriate level of commitment.

## 4. Performing

Only when the three previous stages have been successfully completed will the group be at full maturity and be able to be fully and sensibly productive. Some kind of performance will be achieved at all stages of the development but it is likely to be impeded by the other processes of growth and by individual agendas. In many periodic committees the leadership issue, or the objectives and purpose of the group, are recurring topics that crop up in every meeting in some form or other, seriously hindering the true work of the group.

# Solo Leaders and Team Leaders

The idea of Team Leadership is becoming increasingly popular around the world. Belbin reckons that there are two main reasons for this:

- 1. we are living in a world of increasing uncertainty where things are changing quite dramatically and often very quickly. One person can no longer understand all of this and provide the direction needed to cover every situation.
- 2. team leadership is the only form of leadership that is acceptable in a society where power is shared and so many people are nearly equal.

**As dictators fall, whether in the state or in industry, people are looking for a type of leadership other than one that comes down from high above.**

	Solo Leader	Team Leader
1.	Projects the idea that he knows everything best (interferes)	Chooses to limit his roles and delegates other roles to those who can do better
2.	Strives for conformity - tries to make everybody be the same	Builds of diversity - values the differences in different people
3.	Collects admirers and 'yes men'	Seeks talented people and does not feel threatened by them
4.	Tells subordinates what to do	Encourages colleagues to use their particular strengths in their own way
5.	Management by Objectives - makes it clear exactly what everyone is supposed to do	Creates Mission - helps to clarify the vision which others act on as they think best.

**Notes:**

1.	Plays an unlimited role and interferes in everything that goes on	Takes on those roles in which he is strong and delegates to others who are strong where he is weak
2.	Personally 'knows' what is 'best' and tries to make everybody go along with this personal vision	Appreciates that people are different and makes allowance for their strengths and weaknesses
3.	Does not take kindly to criticism. Prefers people who do what they are told.	Tries to attract and keep hold of people with the special abilities that the team needs
4.	Expects subordinates to follow instructions and not to think for themselves (lack of trust)	Trusts colleagues to make best use of the strengths and encourages them to overcome their weaknesses
5.	Plans everything in advance and expects everybody to follow the plan exactly	Expects and encourages colleagues to be creative in finding ways of making the dream come true

# Enhancing Group Dynamics

## Objectives:

- to develop a group profile of the roles that individual members commonly take
- to encourage each groups to develop its own strategy based on available roles and responsibilities

## Materials:

- sheets of paper with the questions A-K (see below) in a list.

## Time:

- 30 minutes

## Procedure:

1. Hand out one sheet to each person. Each person anonymously ticks just three of the eleven questions according to how he or she feels they perform in groups.
2. Collect the sheets and then hand them back for each group to produce its own profile
3. The profile should contain a list of the roles which are well represented. It should also emphasise what is missing.

## Group Profile

**In groups do you tend to: Tick **THREE** boxes only**

<b>A</b>	stay quiet for a while and then join in?	
<b>B</b>	feel uneasy/uncomfortable and wish you were working alone?	
<b>C</b>	want to take over and structure the discussion?	
<b>D</b>	want to take a leadership role?	
<b>E</b>	encourage others to make a contribution?	
<b>F</b>	come up with new ideas?	
<b>G</b>	interrupt others to ensure your point is made?	
<b>H</b>	remind the group about practical actions and achieving the set objectives?	
<b>I</b>	make everyone relaxed and promote harmony?	
<b>J</b>	get annoyed and frustrated when there is too much talk and not enough decisions and action?	

**K**

mediate between those other team members strongly disagreeing with each other?

**Comment:**

This exercise relies on individuals honestly assessing their own normal rules, and on anonymity when the group considers what roles are present. It helps to generate an atmosphere of self-critical appraisal of group capacity.