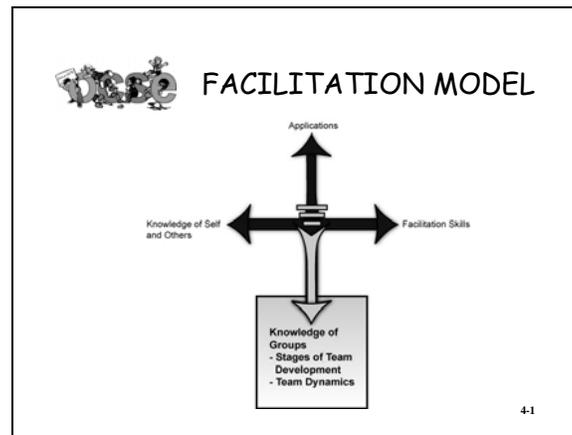


# **MODULE 4**

## **Understanding Team Development and Team Dynamics**



## MODULE 4: UNDERSTANDING TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM DYNAMICS



To be successful in your role as a facilitator, you must understand the developmental process that groups go through in order to become truly effective teams. You will also need to understand the dynamics of group interaction and the roles that various team members assume to help the team operate smoothly and achieve its goal.

### Learning Goal

This module's learning goal is to increase your knowledge of the stages of team development and team dynamics.

The slide, titled "MODULE 4 OBJECTIVES", lists three bullet points on the left and three small images of children on the right. The bullet points are:
 

- Identify the key characteristics and issues of each stage of team development and the role of the facilitator
- Identify the signs of "Groupthink" and ways to overcome this phenomenon
- Describe task and relationship roles and related behaviors

 The three images show a young boy reading, a baby looking at something, and a young girl looking forward. The number "4-2" is in the bottom right corner of the slide's border.

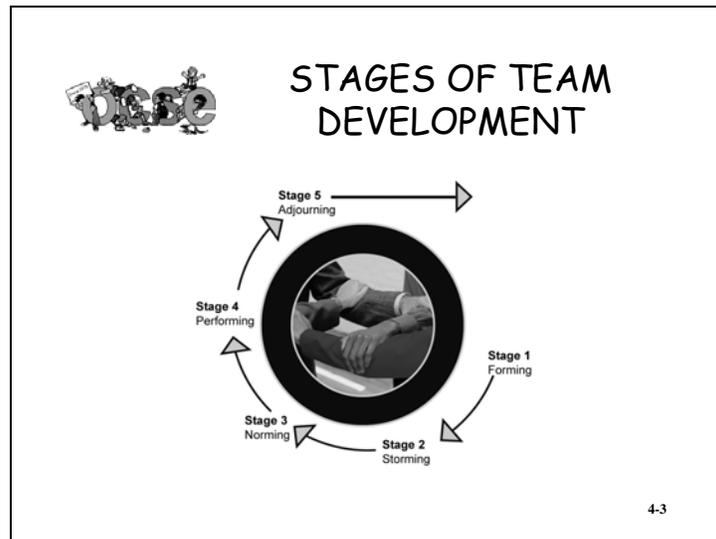
### Learning Objectives

- Through a participative discussion, you will identify the key characteristics and issues of each stage of team development and the role of the facilitator.
- After a brief lecture and readings, you will identify the signs of "Groupthink" and ways to overcome this phenomenon.
- After a large group activity, you will describe task and relationship roles and related behaviors.

## TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Contrary to what many organizations may believe, merely assembling a group of qualified people does not instantly produce a high-performing team. Rather, every team goes through fairly predictable stages of growth during which they address a number of issues and concerns. Every team's movement through the stages will be different. Some teams may progress quickly; others may be "stuck" in one stage for a while. Still others will revisit earlier stages when new team members come on board or when new projects and new challenges arise. In your role as a facilitator, you may work with many types of teams. (For our purposes, we define a team as a group of people who share common responsibility and accountability for the outcomes of the team.)

Regardless of the type or makeup of the group, it is important to recognize that it will go through distinct stages before the members are truly working well together as a team. To be an effective facilitator, you will need to be aware of what happens at each stage in the developmental process and how it will affect the way you facilitate the team.



Social scientists have devised a number of different models that describe how a team evolves. The model depicted above is adapted from one developed by Bruce Tuckman in 1977. As the model illustrates, there are predictable and necessary stages a team will progress through in its development. There are concerns and issues that are specific to each stage and that must be addressed before the team can move on to the next stage.

## STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

The first stage of team development, Team Formation (Forming) is a lot like the first day on the job. There often is a sense of anticipation and excitement as well as some apprehension and perhaps anxiety because of the challenges ahead. The slide below identifies the key characteristics of this stage.



### STAGE 1—TEAM FORMATION (FORMING)

- Uncertainty and/or confusion about team goals, structure, and leadership
- Attempt to understand and define the roles and responsibilities
- Cautious interaction; some may be reluctant to offer opinions or ideas

4-4

During this first stage in its development, the team seems to be accomplishing very little. This is normal since the team's members have concerns around issues of inclusion, contribution, and trust. The next slide identifies the primary questions that are likely to be going through team members' minds.



### STAGE 1—CONCERNS

Issues: Inclusion, Contribution, Trust

- Why am I here?
- What is expected of me?
- Will I be able to do it?
- Will I be accepted and included?
- Can I trust the leader and/or facilitator and team members?

4-5

## STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUED



### STAGE 1—FACILITATOR STRATEGIES

- Plan an activity to help members get acquainted; *icebreaker exercise*
- Define team purpose and goals
- Set ground rules that encourage participation
- Explore needs, concerns, and expectations
- Identify team strengths and resources needed

4-6

As a facilitator, you can help your teams work through Stage 1. During this initial stage, team members will look to you for direction. It's important now to create the type of atmosphere that you want to see throughout the team's life together. For example, rather than answering all the questions or making all of the decisions yourself, it's best to encourage the team to find answers and involve the team in some of the decision-making. The strategies listed in the slide above will help the team work through the Formation stage fairly quickly.

The second stage of team development is Team Conflict or the Storming stage. As its name implies, this is a difficult time in the life of a team. Working with others who have different ideas and perspectives can often lead to frustration and conflict. It's a very uncomfortable time for many people—so uncomfortable that many will try to avoid going through the stage. However, before the team can move on to the next stage, they must confront and resolve the issues and concerns.

The key characteristics of Stage 2 and the typical concerns that team members will have are found on the following pages.

## STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUED



### STAGE 2—TEAM CONFLICT (STORMING)

- Clashing with and confronting each other on all aspects of project
- Appearance of informal leaders who challenge formal leader and/or facilitator
- Resistance from other members resulting in little cooperation or collaboration

4-7



### STAGE 2—CONCERNS

Issues: Power, Control, Influence

- Who will be responsible for what?
- How much authority does the team have?
- How much influence and control will I have?

4-8

## STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUED



### STAGE 2—CONCERNS, continued

- Who is ultimately responsible? Team or individual team members?
- What boundaries do we have?
- Why is he or she a member of this team?

4-9



### STAGE 2—FACILITATOR STRATEGIES

- Tell group that conflict is normal
- Deal with issues openly
- Show commitment and concern
- Follow through on agreements
- Encourage and value contributions
- Be a positive influence and keep team focused

4-10

## STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUED

Stage 3—Team Settlement (Norming) occurs when the team has worked through the first two stages and its members begin to settle into their roles and responsibilities. The slide below identifies the key characteristics of this stage.

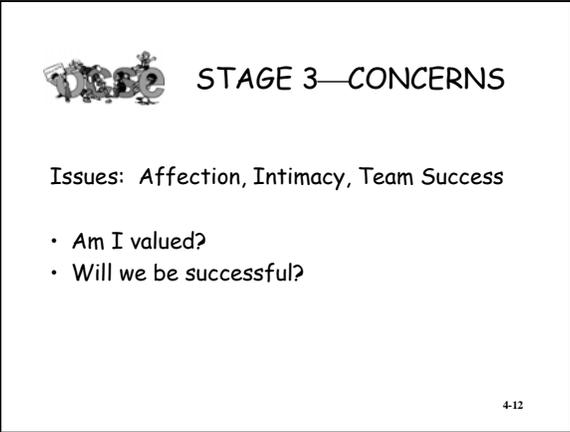


**STAGE 3—TEAM SETTLEMENT (NORMING)**

- Cooperation and collaboration with each other
- Commitment to a common goal
- Group cohesion; members begin to appreciate each other
- Free exchange of ideas and thoughts

4-11

Every stage brings related concerns and issues and Stage 3 is no exception. However, the concerns now typically involve issues related to the degree of affection and intimacy team members have for each other and the success of the team.



**STAGE 3—CONCERNS**

Issues: Affection, Intimacy, Team Success

- Am I valued?
- Will we be successful?

4-12

Compared to the conflict that marked the previous stage, Stage 3 concerns appear fairly benign. However, this third stage may not be entirely smooth. As the facilitator gives more responsibility to team members, some may not assume their share of the responsibility. They may come to depend more on the leader and/or the facilitator for direction. When this happens, experienced facilitators put the responsibility back on the team.

One of the downsides of this stage is that everyone on the team comes to enjoy the camaraderie the team provides so much that they can become too “social” and accomplish very little.

## STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUED



### STAGE 4—TEAM PERFORMANCE (PERFORMING)

- Firmly established structure, goals, responsibilities
- Ability to disagree constructively and work together for good of the team
- Effective and efficient functioning to accomplish tasks

4-13



### STAGE 4—TEAM PERFORMANCE (PERFORMING), continued

- Willingness to take greater risks and become more innovative in problem solving
- Satisfaction, pride, and excitement about the team's work

4-14

## STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUED

Once a team reaches the Performing stage, the facilitator's responsibilities will be somewhat different. The slide below identifies the primary responsibilities during Stage 4.



### STAGE 4—FACILITATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide information and resources needed
- Give frequent feedback
- Apply lessons learned
- Continue to develop trust and commitment
- Challenge team to do its best work
- Celebrate team's successes

4-15

The final stage in a team's life occurs when the project ends and the team members begin to disband. The key characteristics of Stage 5—Team Termination (Adjourning) are given below.



### STAGE 5—TEAM TERMINATION (ADJOURNING)

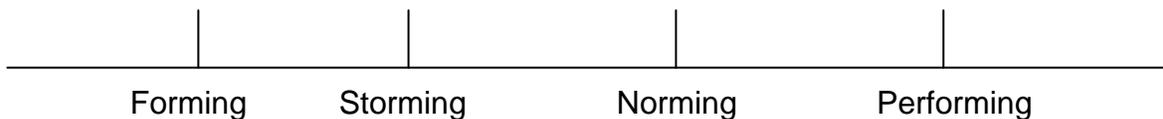
- Project tasks are completed
- Work toward close-out of project
- If project was successful, members feel positive about achievement
- If team formed well, members may feel a sense of loss at being disbanded

4-16

## EXERCISE: IDENTIFYING STAGE OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

### Part 1

Instructions: Think of a team that you are currently facilitating. (If you cannot identify a current team, think of one that you facilitated in the past.) Place an “X” or other mark to indicate where you think the team is in its development.



- What issues/concerns do team members have that indicate they are at this particular point in the team’s development?

### Part 2

Instructions: Take about 20 minutes for group members to share their answers to Part 1. Use the following questions to guide discussion with your group members.

- What can you do to ensure that the team you are facilitating will move through this stage in a productive manner?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Which stage(s) do you think will be most difficult for you to handle? Why?

## “GROUPTHINK”

One of the dangers of Stage 3—Team Settlement (Norming) is a phenomenon known as “Groupthink.” The term was coined by Irving Janis, a researcher who studied the decision-making processes that occurred during the Bay of Pigs attempted invasion of Cuba in 1961 as well as the Korean and Vietnam Wars. “Groupthink” also played a role in the explosion of the NASA Challenger.

“Groupthink” occurs when members of a team place the views of the group above their own ideas or opinions. They focus more on preserving harmony and their relationships with each other than on the problem or task at hand. They subconsciously want to maintain the unity of the team.

Members become so committed to the work of the team that they come to believe that the majority’s view must be right. They do not deliberately avoid criticism. But they sincerely believe that any misgivings or differences of opinion they may have are irrelevant or misguided. They do not voice their misgivings and the group continues to believe everything is all right. As a result, a group may make questionable or wrong decisions if a facilitator is not aware that “Groupthink” is operating and allows it to continue.

## SIGNS OF “GROUPTHINK”

Here are six signs that teams or groups are practicing “Groupthink.”

1. Team members fail to explore all the options when making a decision, thereby limiting their discussions to a minimum number of possible actions. They reach decisions quickly and with a minimum amount of information.
2. Team members will fail to re-examine choices even when they discover there are risks associated with their choices. They continue on, certain that they are right.
3. Team members never “revisit” options that have been rejected to see if they might have missed something. There seems to be an unwritten rule that says once something has been rejected, it is always rejected.
4. Team members regard themselves as the subject matter experts. As a result, they typically will not seek out or listen to expert opinions outside the team.
5. Team members are interested in and only accept evidence that validates their opinion or viewpoint. They discount and set aside anything that contradicts that view.
6. Team members do not believe that their course of action might not work out as planned. Therefore, they do not have a contingency or “backup” plan.

## OVERCOMING “GROUPTHINK”

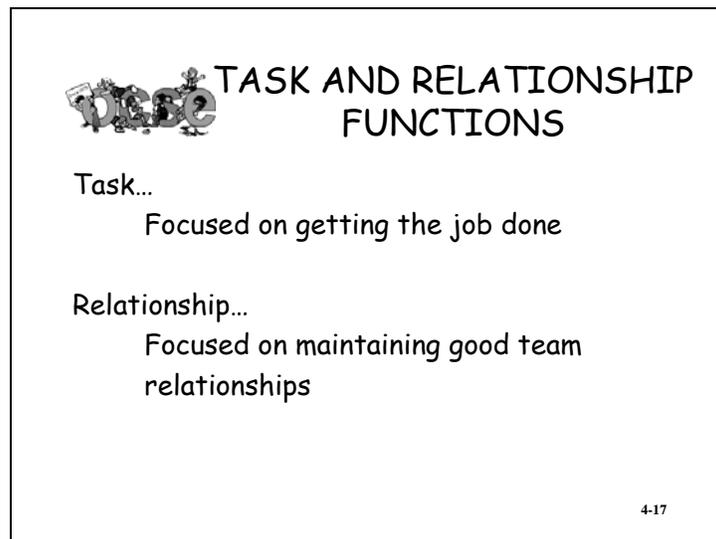
You can use certain techniques to help teams overcome “Groupthink.”

- Emphasize that critical analysis is expected and valued. Require members of your team to research and argue alternative viewpoints. That way, they will not be quick to agree with the group for the sake of agreeing.
- Have a “devil’s advocate” role and rotate it among team members. This role will force the other team members to explain their assumptions and rationales.
- Avoid expressing personal opinions up front. Encourage team members to come up with their own ideas and recommendations. Your role is to remain neutral and keep the focus on the team.
- To ensure your team is “Groupthink-free” on a decision, ask each member to state his or her individual position. This may uncover ideas that someone forgot to mention.
- Encourage members to speak up any time they disagree with the team, have concerns or questions, or believe the team should devote more time to thinking through a decision.
- Do a “reality check.” Bring in outside experts to evaluate and review the team’s ideas and suggestions.
- Ask the team to agree to “revisit meetings” to compare and contrast earlier rejected options with the one that was selected. The meeting also can serve to identify problems that might arise in implementing the selected option.
- Ask team members what data or evidence they have that supports the option they’re proposing. This will determine whether facts have played a part in their opinions. If you know of information that opposes their evidence, provide it for the team.
- Take time to evaluate team functioning. Determine how decisions get made. Identify what is working well, what could be improved, and what could be eliminated.

## GROUP DYNAMICS

Most team members, either consciously or subconsciously, assume roles that affect the way they participate in their team. These roles are constructive and contribute to the team in that they help the team accomplish its mission and goals.

There are two functions with their own set of roles and behaviors that are required for a team to operate smoothly. The slide below identifies these two functions.



**TASK AND RELATIONSHIP FUNCTIONS**

Task...  
Focused on getting the job done

Relationship...  
Focused on maintaining good team relationships

4-17

Task roles and behaviors are directed toward accomplishing the team's mission and goals. They serve to help the team get the work done. For example, they may focus on what the team is supposed to do, what information or ideas it needs or should discuss, or what decisions the team should make. The focus is on the "Whats." Sometimes this is referred to as the "content" function.

## GROUP DYNAMICS, CONTINUED

Relationship roles and behaviors are directed toward maintaining good interpersonal relationships within the team. They serve to promote collaboration and team cohesiveness. For example, they focus on how people work together to accomplish tasks, how they communicate and interact, or how they make decisions. The focus is on the “Hows.” Sometimes this is referred to as the “process” function.

Effective facilitators understand these roles and pay attention to both the “content” and the “process” of team interaction. They also identify the team members who are playing these roles. It’s important to determine if there is an imbalance in roles as this can affect the team’s efforts. Effective facilitators understand the importance of striking a balance and will speak to members individually if necessary and ask them to assume the behaviors of any missing roles.

The relationship roles are developed in Stage 1 of a team’s development. Teams reach Stage 4—Team Performance when the members make sure that both the task and relationship roles are being filled.

Most team member roles and behaviors are generally constructive and contribute to the team’s efforts. On the other hand, there are self-oriented or negative team behaviors that impact the team’s progress. They are usually directed toward satisfying an individual’s psychological needs related to identity, personal needs, power, control, and influence. If allowed to go unchecked, they can become an obstacle to the entire facilitation process.

Effective facilitators quickly identify the negative roles and behavior and take action. Negative behaviors are more likely to occur early in the team’s life, especially during the Forming and Storming stages. We will examine negative behaviors more closely in Module 6, Managing Challenging Behaviors. The slide below lists the most common self-oriented behaviors.



### SELF-ORIENTED BEHAVIORS

- Arguing and disagreeing
- Taking or exerting control
- Joking or making fun
- Criticizing, often sarcastically
- Refusing to participate
- Pushing others to comply with own personal agendas

4-18

## MODULE 4 KEY POINTS



### MODULE 4 KEY POINTS

The effective facilitator:

- Understands a team's developmental process and guides it through the stages
- Ensures that the team is not practicing "Groupthink"

4-19



### MODULE 4 KEY POINTS, continued

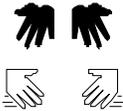
The effective facilitator:

- Strikes a balance between task and relationship functions so everyone can contribute
- Determines if self-oriented behaviors are typical or occur because of the team's stage

4-20

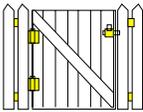
## EXERCISE: REFLECTION

**Instructions:** Refer to Exercise: Identifying Stage of Team Development on page 4-10 of your Participant Guide. Use the team you selected for that exercise. Review the task roles below and match the roles with the members of your team. More than one person can fill a role. You may also assign the same person to several roles or leave some roles unfilled. Be sure to include yourself. Base your decisions on your perception of how your team functions. Write the name(s) on the line below the role. Repeat this process for the relationship roles on the next page and answer the questions that follow.



**Agreement Seeker:** Attempts to reconcile disagreements; reduces tension; gets people to explore differences

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**Gatekeeper:** Helps to keep communication channels open; facilitates the participation of others; suggests procedures that permit sharing remarks

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**Consensus Taker:** Asks to see whether the team is nearing a decision; “sends up trial balloons” to test possible solutions

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**Advocate:** Is friendly, warm, and responsive to others; indicates by facial expressions or remarks the acceptance of others' contributions

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**Compromiser:** Offers compromises when his or her own ideas are involved in conflicts; modifies those ideas in the interest of team cohesiveness or growth

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**Source:** Eileen Guthrie and Warren Sam Miller, 1981, *Process Politics: A Guide for Group Leaders*, San Diego, CA: University Associates. Originally adapted with special permission from NTL Institute, “What to Observe in a Group,” by Edgar H. Schein, 1976, in *Reading Book for Human Relations Training* (pp. 28-30), edited by Cyril R. Mill and Lawrence C. Porter.

## EXERCISE: REFLECTION, CONTINUED



**Initiator:** Proposes tasks, goals, or actions; defines team problems; suggests procedures

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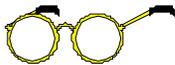
**Information Seeker:** Asks for factual clarification; requests facts pertinent to the discussion

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Data  
Knowledge  
Facts  
Findings  
News

**Information Giver:** Offers facts; gives expression of feelings; gives opinions

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**Definer:** Interprets ideas or suggestions; defines terms; clarifies issues before the team; clears up confusion

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$$\frac{X + Y}{Z} =$$

**Reviewer:** Pulls together related ideas; restates suggestions; offers decisions or conclusions for the team to consider

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**Supporter:** Goes along with the movement of the team; passively accepts the ideas of others; serves as an audience in team discussion and decision-making

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1. Review the task and relationship roles. What roles are missing, if any?
2. If there are roles unfilled, which participants can you speak to who can fill these roles?
3. What do you need to maintain or change the balance?