

Group Development/Dynamics

NSSLHA BRAINSTORMING!

Elements of an Effective Group

- Clear understanding of goals: overall & immediate
- Flexible in selecting procedures to achieve goals
- High degree of communication & understanding among members
- Able to initiate and carry out effective decision making

Effective Groups

- Carefully considers minority viewpoints
- Secures commitment of all members to important decisions
- Achieves appropriate balance between group productivity and satisfaction of individual needs
- Provides for sharing of leadership responsibilities

Effective Groups

- High degree of cohesiveness
- Makes intelligent use of the differing abilities of its members
- Can be objective about reviewing its own processes
- Maintains a balance between emotional and rational behavior

5 Stages of Group Development

- Forming (getting acquainted)
- Storming (struggling forward)
- Norming (becoming personal)
- Performing (working together)
- Adjourning

Forming

- Characterized by sense of uncertainty and awkwardness and perhaps anxiety
- "rules of the road" (group norms) have not yet been defined
- Participants looking to find out what is and isn't OK
- Leaders need to set the tone
- Most participants are polite – "put best foot forward"
- Superficial harmony and cooperation

Storming

- Characterized by individual assertive behavior which may result in some group instability
- Each person wants to feel a sense of individual importance to the group
- Don't be surprised if there is some group conflict at this stage
 - May not always surface, but they are there

Norming

- Characterized by growth of affection and establishment of personal relationships
- Members begin to take responsibility for resolving conflicts and strengthening friendships
- Members begin to experience a sense of group belonging

Performing

- Characterized by harmony (unity) among group members
- Decision making and problem solving shared within the group
- Members can work independently, in subgroups or as a total unit with equal ease and effectiveness
- Not reached by all groups

Adjourning

- Involves termination of task and disengagement from relationships
- Chance to say goodbye and acknowledge contributions

Initial Stage of Group Development

- Questions Members Often Ask Themselves
 - Will I be accepted or rejected here?
 - How will this group be different from my daily interactions?
 - What risks will I take here?
 - How am I like other people here? Different?
 - Will I feel pressured and pushed to perform in some way?
 - How important will I be?

Concerns and Fears

- I'm afraid I'll look stupid
- Will others like me?
- What if the group attacks me?
- What if I'm asked to do something I don't want to do?

Some Ways to Start a Group Session

- Go around the room and have each member state what he/she wants from the upcoming session
- As leaders, share your thoughts about where the group is at, how it is progressing, ways the group may be getting stuck, etc.
- Have each member complete the sentence: "Today I'd like to get actively involved by..."

Some Ways to End a Group Session

- Ask members to tell the group what they learned about themselves through their relationships with other members in that particular session
- Instruct "Let's do a quick go-around and have everyone say a few words regarding the groups goals"
- Determine if there are any issues that members would like to return to or explore in the next session

Information gathered from:

- www.gmu.edu/student/csl/5stages.html
- www.gmu.edu/student/csl/initial.html
- www.princeton.edu/~oa/manual/sect9.html

Brainstorming!

- Allows for creativity and involvement in the planning process
- Great motivational opportunity for members
- Create a list of ideas before decisions are made

Brainstorming steps

1. Gather a group of members
2. Define the topic for which you will be generating ideas
3. Assign a facilitator
 1. This person will be responsible for getting everyone involved in the process, and will also be the point person to ensure flow of ideas

Brainstorming steps

4. Review a few grounds rules
 - any idea is acceptable
 - do not criticize other people's ideas
 - Record all thoughts (appoint a secretary)
 - Reduce "dead air" – keep ideas flowing
 - Build on other ideas when given the opportunity
 - Focus on quantity, not quality (the quality will come later when you refine the brainstorming list)

Brainstorming Steps

5. Establish a time for brainstorming
6. Start brainstorming!
7. After you have finished brainstorming, sort through your list of generated ideas and establish a follow up discussion to make decisions about the presented thoughts

Brainstorming Fun!

- Split the organization into smaller groups, and have a competition to see which group can come up with the most creative ideas
- Write down five concepts of five separate sheets of paper and spread them out across a long table.
 - Give everyone 10 sticky notes and the group 5 minutes to build on each other's ideas.
 - You must write your ideas on a sticky note, can only put your sticky note on an idea already on the table
 - At the end of 5 minutes, see who can use the most sticky notes and generate the most ideas!
 - <http://sao.nd.edu/studentleadership/officersources/development/brainstorming.shtml>