

# GROUP DYNAMICS AND TEAM BUILDING

Second Edition

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# Group Dynamics and Team Building

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Ann-Marie Nazzaro, Joyce Strazzabosco

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## Introduction

This monograph was developed as a companion to a workshop on group dynamics and team building, presented at the WFH Global NMO Training Workshop May 16-18, 2002, in Huelva, Spain. The workshop offered two methods of learning: (1) brief talks by the facilitators that described some theory, and (2) structured activities through which the participants experienced and then discussed some of the elements of group dynamics and team building.

In this monograph, we will review some of the theories of group dynamics and team building that were addressed in that workshop. In addition, we have included structured activities that may be used in local group settings. It would be advisable to identify a volunteer who has some experience in managing group dynamics to facilitate the activities.

We wish to acknowledge that the content of this monograph is taken from materials and theories developed in the United States. Therefore, it reflects a western European cultural context. Some human behaviours transcend cultural differences; others do not. The reader will be the best judge of how relevant the material may be for his or her local group. We offer these ideas and exercises as tools to understanding and improving the effectiveness of one's own group; they are not intended to influence or replace readers' cultural traditions.

The subjects of group dynamics and team building are broad. One can study each of these topics for years and still have more to learn. There are many ways to approach each. A simple Internet search will result in thousands of web sites on either group dynamics or team building.

These subjects are important because they influence how productive a group or a team becomes. By understanding group dynamics and by doing some team building, a group can increase how much it accomplishes.

## Understanding Group Dynamics

The term "group dynamics" refers to the interactions between people who are talking together in a group setting. Group dynamics can be studied in business settings, in volunteer settings, in classroom settings, and in social settings. Any time there are three or more individuals interacting or talking together, there are group dynamics.

A great deal can be learned by observation. If one sits back quietly in a group — any group — one will begin to see certain behavioural patterns emerge. There will be at least one person who tends to take the lead in conversation, offering his or her thoughts and opinions freely. There will be at least one person who remains quiet, sometimes not even appearing interested in the conversation. There may be someone who tends to interrupt other people, someone who wants the conversation to move along faster, or who wants to focus on a different subject. Another person may be concerned about peoples' feelings and may try to make everyone feel equally welcome. These are only a few of the roles that people assume without even thinking about it when they are in a group setting.

Group roles are largely determined by a combination of a person's personality and his or her experience with group settings. A person who is shy is more likely to sit back in a group. A person who is impatient is more likely to push the discussion ahead. A person who is very confident will offer more opinions. If such roles are more or less pre-determined, how can the group dynamics be improved?

The way a group interacts can be improved in several ways. There are training programs to attend and there are tests one can take to learn about one's communication style. Perhaps the simplest way to improve a group's dynamics is for one or more group members to learn to *manage* the discussion, and thus help a group accomplish its goals, much as a conductor

manages the many players in an orchestra to produce a blended sound. By “manage” we mean respond to and redirect the behaviour or participation of an individual to a direction that is better for the group. Whether or not the group is managed, group roles will occur. By learning about the typical kinds of behaviour that emerge, and how to respond to them appropriately, one can improve the effectiveness of group discussions. [See Appendix 1: Techniques for Managing Group Dynamics.]

The two most common roles affecting a group’s effectiveness are the person who dominates and the person who remains silent. It can be as difficult to get the quiet person to speak as it is to get the talkative person to talk less. To manage the dominant person, one might say something like, “You have a lot of good ideas, Carlos. I have written them down to discuss later. For now, we need to talk about \_\_\_\_\_.” To the quieter person, one might say, “What are your thoughts on this subject, Marie?” It is best to ask the quieter person a question that cannot be answered by a simple “yes” or “no.” A broad question “casts a wider net,” to use a fishing analogy. In any case, a direct and respectful approach is recommended where possible. (Note: In some cultures, directness is not appropriate. In some cultures, directness is acceptable, but only between certain types of people. This is an example of when a reader may have to “translate” a suggested behaviour into his or her own culture.)

There are a variety of other roles that may emerge in a group, and a textbook on group dynamics would be a good resource for learning more about them. In addition to being influenced by culture, roles are influenced by gender, age, race/ethnicity, religious tradition, and other traits. For most people, though, it is sufficient to know that group settings do bring out certain behaviours, and an effective group is one in which those behaviours are channeled positively to move the agenda forward.

Finally, one should be aware that the management of group dynamics can emerge from any group member. The person with the authority to lead (the chairperson or group convener) may not be the person who is best at actually managing group dynamics. Any group member who sees an opportunity should *seize*

the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the members’ interactions. The entire group is responsible for its own effectiveness and all members share equally in that responsibility. The chairperson or convener has agreed to perform certain duties, but it should not be assumed that he or she is the sole leader. Indeed, we will see below in the section on team building that an effective group or team is one in which each member assumes responsibility according to his or her talents and expertise.

## Getting Acquainted

Since group dynamics and team building are based fundamentally on the relationships among the people involved, it is both courteous and sensible to assure that the members all are introduced to each other, and that they are offered opportunities to get to know each other and to build relationships. A group or team with members who know each other well is likely to be more effective. People tend to offer more of themselves when they are with people whom they know than when they are with strangers. It is therefore a good idea to spend some time helping people get acquainted with one another.

Often we assume people know each other when they do not. A common feeling among newcomers is that the more senior members of the group are somewhat exclusive. This is because the senior members know each other better and have well-established patterns of communication. They have past experiences in common and they may forget to explain certain references to the newcomers. This can lead to a feeling of exclusion, and if it is not corrected, the newcomers might leave the group.

It is the responsibility of the current members to help the newcomers get oriented to the group and to its members. There are many ways to accomplish this. People have created activities called “Ice Breakers” or “Get-Acquainted Activities.” A search on the Internet using either of those terms will produce many examples. These simple games can get people interacting with each other.

One popular ice-breaker is to divide the group into pairs, and have one person interview the other for a few minutes, and then switch.

Sometimes an outline is given for the interview questions. Then the group is called back together, and each person introduces his or her partner to the whole group. Individuals learn a bit about the importance of listening when they begin to introduce their partners. They also learn something about the various members of the group. Many find it easier to talk about someone else than to talk about themselves in a large group. The timing for this exercise is about 5 minutes for the interviews, and 30-60 seconds for each introduction.

Simpler still is to begin each meeting by asking the members to introduce themselves, and to specify at least part of what they should talk about, with the leader or the chairperson going first to set an example. Below is a list of some suggested topics for introduction:

- Tell your name, how long you have been involved with the group, and how you became involved with this group.
- Introduce yourself and tell us where you grew up.
- Introduce yourself and tell us a valuable life lesson that you have learned, such as:
  - What you think your greatest strength is;
  - A funny thing that happened to you;
  - When you first learned about our organization;
  - The farthest away you have ever traveled, and why you went there; and
  - One thing you hope we accomplish in the next six months.

The more one gets to know another person, the more he or she will understand that person. The better people understand each other, the more effectively they can work together. Taking five to ten minutes to get acquainted at the beginning of a meeting is a very sound investment of time.

### Clarifying Expectations

Underlying every perception is one's expectation. "Expectation" is that often-unspoken idea we have of how things are going to be, or how people will behave, or how people will react. Many times people are surprised when something happens that is different from what they expected. They may be so surprised

that they are unable to react appropriately to the reality, because they are so caught up in their expectation.

In any group of individuals brought together for a purpose, every one of those participants will likely have a slightly different expectation of what is going to happen and how it is going to happen. This underlying expectation may colour an individual's reactions to the stated agenda. Therefore, it is a good idea to spend a minute or two clarifying members' expectations. It can even become a part of the "getting acquainted" stage. A simple, open-ended question can put the expectations on the table: "What do you expect us to accomplish today?"

### Group Problem Solving

Groups tend to form for one of two reasons: either for purely social purposes (a celebration, for example) or to get something accomplished. In the latter case, there will be some form of problem solving required of the group. It is when a group is trying to accomplish something that the interactions or dynamics become stronger, especially if the group is under constraints in time and resources. There are structured experiences, such as "Broken Squares" [See Appendix 3]. This is a fairly simple, straight-forward exercise that can bring out varying styles and skills that can make a group cohesive and effective. It can help group members learn what helps and what hinders group problem solving.

Successful group problem solving depends first on good communication among the members. By "communication" we mean the sharing of information by everyone. Silence does not mean approval. In fact, *we do not know what silence means until it is broken*. We do know that each person has a contribution to make. Members must offer what they know, what they observe, what they think, what they feel for the group to be most effective. The following are some recommendations for effectively solving a problem as a group.

- Each member should understand the total problem or task. Someone, usually the chairperson or task leader, should summarize the task that is to be done. He or

she should seek clarification from the members to assure that everyone understands what the group will be doing.

- Each person should realize how he or she can contribute to the solution. Everyone has talent and skills that they were born with, as well as talents and skills they have acquired. Most of us tend to downplay or minimize what we have to offer. Problem solving is no time to be modest about one's talents. All available skills and talents should be on the table for use by the group in solving its problem.
- Each person should recognize the potential contributions of others. Again, *everyone* has talent and skills they were born with, and those they have acquired through education and experience. Sometimes we recognize a talent or skill in another person that they do not fully realize themselves. It is helpful to give that person encouragement to participate.
- Members should be willing to recognize when other members may need more information or assistance, and to offer their help so that each member can make his or her full contribution to the effort.
- Negotiation is important to success. The very differences that bring many talents into a group also bring in different opinions and perceptions. The best solution is one that everyone finds acceptable. The group should make decisions based on what is in the organization's best interest.
- It is the group's responsibility to help manage the group's dynamics; for example, to help the shy person to contribute, and to help the dominant person make time available for others to speak.
- Everyone operates with assumptions and expectations, and it is important to clarify what those are at the beginning, and whenever it may be necessary.
- Sometimes members lose sight of what the original purpose was and may get sidetracked. These "detours" can waste a lot of the group's time. It is important to keep the purpose, goal, or task in mind, and to bring the discussion back to the stated focus. This is the shared responsibility of all group members.
- Everyone has leadership qualities, and leadership may change depending on the situation or task. Leadership means influence; the person with the most influence is not always the person with the most authority. If a member sees an opportunity that is in the group's best interest, he or she is obligated to call that opportunity to the group's attention.
- Not every task is appropriate for a group. Writing, for example, is best accomplished by an individual. Drafting a budget is better accomplished by an individual. The result or product may be approved by the group, but the actual task of writing or calculating should be performed by an individual.

## Team Building

What is a team? It is a group that has a job to do, whether as paid participants or as volunteers. It is a group that has spent some time together, whether in smaller increments over a long period of time, or by spending a weekend or more working together on something. It is a group that achieves cohesiveness; a team's strength is found in the relationships among the team members. It is a group with a common objective, whose members are very clear about working toward one purpose. It is a group whose members are *interdependent*. Whereas other groups may recognize the strengths of each member, team members *rely* on the strengths of each member to accomplish the objective.

An ideal team has a number of distinct characteristics, and they fall into three areas: their feedback and communication behaviours, their behaviour and conduct courtesies, and their ways of approaching tasks and problems.

"Feedback and communication behaviours" describe how the members talk with one another, clarify their expectations, react to each



other's ideas and offer their perceptions and opinions. In an ideal team, the members:

- Ask for help from other members when it is needed and do not waste precious time struggling alone;
- Give positive comments to each other regularly and often, because they know it motivates teammates;
- Give negative observations when necessary, but do it constructively, for example: "Frank, that proposal you wrote is very good, but it's a little weak in the evaluation section. Joe has done a lot of evaluations, perhaps he can help";
- Receive negative observations from another member without becoming defensive, because they know the comments are not meant to be insulting, but are meant to help the team accomplish its goals;
- Support other team members in times of crisis, for example: "Lars, I'm sorry to hear about your family illness. Why don't you go home and I will finish your assignment";
- Offer help to others when their own work is completed.

"Behaviour and conduct courtesies" describe the protocols that the members have agreed to as a responsibility of being a member of the team. In an ideal team, the members:

- Are ambassadors of that team, and represent the team, not just themselves;
- Remain open-minded and receptive to all ideas, however different from their own;
- Give another member time to get his idea out, and paraphrase the idea to assure they understand the intended message;
- Take turns speaking;
- Encourage full participation by all members;
- Do not have side conversations during a discussion, because participants might miss

something important (and because it is disrespectful of the others);

- Stay focused on the task at hand, and do not engage in distracting behaviours;
- Call a time-out if they feel another member's behaviour is disruptive;
- Make the team meeting a priority so that attendance is consistent;
- Begin and end meetings on time, so members can use their time most efficiently;
- Obtain closure on topics and get a decision;
- Summarize and clarify the meeting at the end.

Ways of approaching tasks and problems. In an ideal team, the members:

- Accept every problem as a *team* problem, not one belonging only to one member;
- Never say "we cannot do this," but say "how *can* we do this?";
- Determine the action items that any decision requires, or think through how to carry out decisions;
- Share failures as a team, never blaming only one or two members;
- Look at failures as a way to improve the team functioning, because we can always learn something from failure;
- Share all information, so that everyone is working from the same body of information;
- Use consensus for major decisions, which results in finding the most acceptable decision for everyone, as opposed to voting, in which there are clear winners and losers;
- Stay focused on the purpose of the team, which is to accomplish something together.

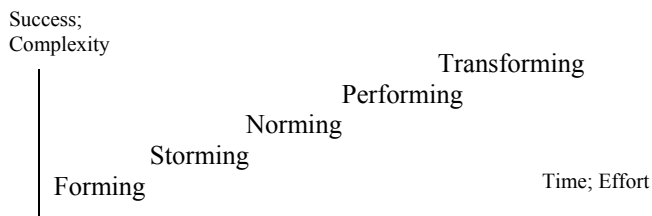
A successful team will monitor its own effectiveness and progress. Any member of the

team who observes that the team is under-performing has the responsibility to bring it to the attention of the entire group so that appropriate action can be taken to correct the problem.

Occasionally, there may be a member of the group who is not really there to advance the group's objective, but perhaps to advance his or her own individual objective. If the person remains unwilling to put the group's objective first, then he or she may have to be removed as a member, or reassigned to a different group that better corresponds with his or her personal objectives. High-performing teams take whatever steps may be necessary to remain focused on their purpose.

## Team Development

Teams and groups are living organisms with certain predictable stages of development. One characterization of the progression of team development has been depicted by a series of steps on a graph. One axis represents success with tasks that are more and more complicated, and the other represents the amount of time and effort that the group has invested in becoming a team. The graph looks like this:



“Forming” is the initial stage of development, when team members may often have differing ideas about purpose. There is relatively little trust. People tend to be careful about what they say, and how they say it. Everyone is on his or her “best behaviour.”

“Storming” represents the arguing that will likely occur as the team defines itself. There may be conflict about the purpose, leadership, and working procedures. During this stage people often feel the team will never “come together.” This stage is similar to the human developmental stage of adolescence.

“Norming” is the stage that occurs when the team members are developing a shared vision and are setting goals and objectives. People are getting to know one another's strengths and are learning how best to work together. The team experiences more stability and productivity.

“Performing” indicates that the members now have a clear, shared sense of purpose, high trust, and open communication. The team is effective within the existing paradigm. Camaraderie, relationships, and team spirit are high.

“Transforming” occurs when the team is at such an effective level of functioning that it can redefine its shared purpose and respond quickly to change. The leadership within the team is shared, trust is high, and communication is open.

The point of knowing about the stages of a team is two-fold: (1) it can be helpful simply to know that there *are* stages, and that it is normal to go through these stages; (2) one can identify the stage of development for a given group or team, and can assist the progress through that stage by managing the interactions or dynamics between and among the members. If there is low trust, one can arrange for trust-building exercises. If the team is in discord about its purpose, there are techniques for helping to determine the common priorities. [For an additional description, see Appendix 4: Team Stages.]

## Achieving Group Consensus

Arriving at a decision can be a difficult process for a group. Many groups resort to voting to decide issues. When possible, it is useful to work to achieve consensus.

Consensus differs from voting in that it is more a process of achieving maximum agreement. A topic is discussed until every member is willing to agree. That agreement might be more enthusiastic for some members than others, but all members are on the positive side of agreeing.

Like problem solving, consensus requires that everyone share whatever information, opinions, facts, or feelings they may have. It is through this pooling of contributions that the group is

able to come to a decision that satisfies everyone.

There are a number of activities that can help groups practice consensus building. Typically they require each member to answer individually some sort of questions or rank-order a list of items. When each has completed the task individually, the group then sets about making one list. Invariably the group rankings are more accurate than the individual rankings. This is because there is greater knowledge in the group than in any single individual.

Achieving consensus requires some negotiating. Individual members are usually convinced that their original answers are correct. Only through listening to someone who thinks differently can one begin to see something in a different way. Explaining the reason behind one's thought can help others to see its merit.

Finally, when everyone is committed to a common purpose, the task is more easily accomplished. Commitment to a purpose helps one move past one's own initial thinking, and allows one to listen to a diversity of ideas. Through this the group achieves the best result, by benefiting from the best of all of the members.

## Conclusion

More can be accomplished with groups than can be achieved by individuals alone, but to be productive a group must remain focused and healthy. One analogy is to liken a group to a motor vehicle. A group, like a vehicle, can get someone to a place faster. Most of us are more interested in our destination than we are in the vehicle that carries us there. However, if we do not pay attention to the vehicle, it will fall into disrepair. A group, too, needs fueling and maintenance.

Another analogy is that of a garden. One plants a garden and then tends to it, giving it water and nutrients, removing the weeds, and with sufficient time and attention the garden flourishes. A group, too, needs nourishment, and to have its "weeds" (e.g. inappropriate behaviours) removed.

One cannot take a group for granted, any more than one can take a garden or a vehicle for granted. To do so invites problems. It is far better to give some time and attention to the group's dynamics from time to time. By doing so, a group can sustain its forward development and achieve its full potential. 🌱

## Resources

- <http://www.businessfundamentals.com/TeamBuilding.htm> (**Broken Squares**).
- <http://p2001.health.org/CTI02/17h-cda3.htm> (**NASA Exercise**).
- **Managing Teams**, Lawrence Holpp, McGraw-Hill NY, 1999.
- **Who's Got the Ball** (and other nagging questions about team life), Maureen O'Brien, Josey-Bass NY, 1995.
- **Training Dynamics**, NHF Executive Staff Training, 1999.

## Appendix 1

### Techniques for Managing Group Dynamics

There are many techniques to assist the facilitator in managing the agenda and group dynamics. The following are just a few of the more common and frequently used techniques available to the facilitator. Be creative and adaptive. Different situations require different techniques. With experience will come an understanding of how they affect group dynamics and when is the best time to use them.

#### Equalizing Participation

The facilitator is responsible for the fair distribution of attention during meetings. Facilitators call the attention of the group to one speaker at a time. The grammar school method is the most common technique for choosing the next speaker. The facilitator recognizes each person in the order in which hands are raised. Often, inequities occur because the attention is dominated by an individual or class of individuals. This can occur because of socialized behavioural problems such as racism, sexism, or the like, or internal dynamics such as experience, seniority, fear, shyness, disrespect, ignorance of the process, etc. Inequities can be corrected in many creative ways. For example, if men are speaking more often than women, the facilitator can suggest a pause after each speaker, the women counting to five before speaking, the men counting to ten. In controversial situations, the facilitator can request that three speakers speak for the proposal, and three speak against it. If the group would like to avoid having the facilitator select who speaks next, the group can self-select by asking the last speaker to pass an object, a talking stick, to the next. Even more challenging, have each speaker stand before speaking, and begin when there is only one person standing. These are only a handful of the many possible problems and solutions that exist. Be creative. Invent your own.

#### Listing

To help the discussion flow more smoothly, those who want to speak can silently signal the facilitator, who would add the person's name to a list of those wishing to speak, and call on them in that order.

#### Stacking

If many people want to speak at the same time, it is useful to ask all those who would like to speak to raise their hands. Have them count off, and then have them speak in that order. At the end of the stack, the facilitator might call for another stack or try another technique.

#### Pacing

The pace or flow of the meeting is the responsibility of the facilitator. If the atmosphere starts to become tense, choose techniques which encourage balance and cooperation. If the meeting is going slowly and people are becoming restless, suggest a stretch or rearrange the agenda.

#### Checking the Process

If the flow of the meeting is breaking down or if one person or small group seems to be dominating, anyone can call into question the technique being used and suggest an alternative.

#### Silence

If the pace is too fast, if energies and tensions are high, if people are speaking out of turn or interrupting one another, it is appropriate for anyone to suggest a moment of silence to calm and refocus energy.

#### Taking a Break

In the heat of discussion, people are usually resistant to interrupting the flow to take a break, but a wise facilitator knows, more often than not, that a five-minute break will save a frustrating half hour or more of circular discussion and fruitless debate.

**Call for Consensus**

The facilitator, or any member recognized to speak by the facilitator, can call for a test for consensus. To do this, the facilitator asks if there are any unresolved concerns, which remain unaddressed.

**Summarizing**

The facilitator might choose to focus what has been said by summarizing. The summary might be made by the facilitator, the note taker, or anyone else appropriate. This preempts a common problem, in which the discussion becomes circular, and one after another, speakers repeat each other.

**Reformulating the Proposal**

After a long discussion, it sometimes happens that the proposal becomes modified without any formal decision. The facilitator needs to recognize this and take time to reformulate the proposal with the new information, modifications, or deletions. Then the proposal is presented to the group so that everyone can be clear about what is being considered. Again, this might be done by the facilitator, the note taker, or anyone else.

**Stepping Out of Role**

If the facilitator wants to become involved in the discussion or has strong feelings about a particular agenda item, the facilitator can step out of the role and participate in the discussion, allowing another member to facilitate during that time.

**Passing the Clipboard**

Sometimes information needs to be collected during the meeting. To save time, circulate a clipboard to collect this information. Once collected, it can be entered into the written record and/or presented to the group by the facilitator.

**Polling (Straw Polls)**

The usefulness of polling within consensus is primarily clarification of the relative importance of several issues. It is an especially useful technique when the facilitator is confused or uncertain about the status of a proposal and wants some clarity to be able to suggest what might be the next process technique. Polls are not decisions, they are non-binding referenda. All too often, straw polls are used when the issues are completely clear and the majority wants to intimidate the minority into submission by showing overwhelming support, rather than to discuss the issues and resolve the concerns. Clear and simple questions are best. Polls that involve three or more choices can be especially manipulative. Use with discretion.

**Censoring**

(This technique and the next are somewhat different from the others. They may not be appropriate for some groups.) If someone speaks out of turn consistently, the facilitator warns the individual at least twice that if the interruptions do not stop, the facilitator will declare that person censored. This means the person will not be permitted to speak for the rest of this agenda item. If the interrupting behaviour has been exhibited over several agenda items, then the censoring could be for a longer period of time. This technique is meant to be used at the discretion of the facilitator. If the facilitator censors someone and others in the meeting voice disapproval, it is better for the facilitator to step down from the role and let someone else facilitate, rather than get into a discussion about the ability and judgment of the facilitator. The rationale is the disruptive behaviour makes facilitation very difficult, is disrespectful and, since it is assumed that everyone observed the behaviour, the voicing of disapproval about a censoring indicates lack of confidence in the facilitation rather than support for the disruptive behaviour.

**Expulsion**

If an individual still acts very disruptively, the facilitator may confront the behaviour. Ask the person to explain the reasons for this behaviour, how it is in the best interest of the group, how it relates to the group's purpose, and how it is in keeping with the goals and principles. If the person is unable to answer

these questions or if the answers indicate disagreement with the common purpose, then the facilitator can ask the individual to withdraw from the meeting.

### **Group Discussion Techniques**

It is often assumed that the best form of group discussion is that which has one person at a time speak to the whole group. This is true for some discussions. But, sometimes, other techniques of group discussion can be more productive and efficient than whole group discussion. The following are some of the more common and frequently used techniques. These could be suggested by anyone at the meeting. Therefore, it is a good idea if everyone is familiar with these techniques. Again, be creative and adaptive. Different situations require different techniques. Only experience reveals how each one affects group dynamics or the best time to use it.

### **Identification**

It is good to address each other by name. One way to learn names is to draw a seating plan, and as people go around and introduce themselves, write their names on it. Later, refer to the plan and address people by their names. In large groups, name tags can be helpful. Also, when people speak, it is useful for them to identify themselves so all can gradually learn each others' names.

### **Whole Group**

The value of whole group discussion is the evolution of a group idea. A group idea is not simply the sum of individual ideas, but the result of the interaction of ideas during discussion. Whole group discussion can be unstructured and productive. It can also be very structured, using various facilitation techniques to focus it. Often, whole group discussion does not produce maximum participation or a diversity of ideas. During whole group discussion, fewer people get to speak, and, at times, the attitude of the group can be dominated by an idea, a mood, or a handful of people.

### **Small Group**

Breaking into smaller groups can be very useful. These small groups can be diads or triads or even larger. They can be selected randomly or self-selected. If used well, in a relatively short amount of time all participants have the opportunity to share their own point of view. Be sure to set clear time limits and select a note taker for each group. When the larger group reconvenes, the note takers relate the major points and concerns of their group. Sometimes, note takers can be requested to add only new ideas or concerns and not repeat something already covered in another report. It is also helpful for the scribe to write these reports so all can see the cumulative result and be sure every idea and concern gets on the list.

### **Brainstorming**

This is a very useful technique when ideas need to be solicited from the whole group. The normal rule of waiting to speak until the facilitator recognizes you is suspended and everyone is encouraged to call out ideas to be written by the scribe for all to see. It is helpful if the atmosphere created is one in which all ideas, no matter how unusual or incomplete, are appropriate and welcomed. This is a situation in which suggestions can be used as catalysts, with ideas building one upon the next, generating very creative possibilities. Avoid evaluating each other's ideas during this time.

### **Go-rounds**

This is a simple technique that encourages participation. The facilitator states a question and then goes around the room inviting everyone to answer briefly. This is not an open discussion. This is an opportunity to individually respond to specific questions, not to comment on each other's responses or make unrelated remarks.

**Fishbowl**

The fishbowl is a special form of small group discussion. Several members representing differing points of view meet in an inner circle to discuss the issue while everyone else forms an outer circle and listens. At the end of a predetermined time, the whole group reconvenes and evaluates the fishbowl discussion. An interesting variation: first, put all the men in the fishbowl, then all the women, and they discuss the same topics.

**Active Listening**

If the group is having a hard time understanding a point of view, someone might help by active listening. Listen to the speaker, then repeat back what was heard and ask the speaker if this accurately reflects what was meant.

**Caucusing**

A caucus might be useful to help a multifaceted conflict become clearer by unifying similar perspectives or defining specific points of departure without the focus of the whole group. It might be that only some people attend a caucus, or it might be that all are expected to participate in a caucus. The difference between caucuses and small groups is that caucuses are composed of people with similar viewpoints, whereas small group discussions are more useful if they are made up of people with diverse viewpoints or even a random selection of people.

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## Appendix 2

### **Building and Managing Successful Virtual Teams**

There can be times when it is not possible to bring a team together to plan its work at in-person meetings. Also, funding, budget, or lean economic times might dictate that teams meet via the Internet and forego travel expenses. With the advances in e-communications, there is a budding literature on managing virtual teams and ensuring their success.

We reference one online article as an example of this guidance for building a successful virtual team:

The *5 C's of Building Virtual Teams* (2002), by Jennifer Rasmussen. It can be found at:  
[www.employeedevelopmentsolutions.com/freearicles/virtualteams.htm](http://www.employeedevelopmentsolutions.com/freearicles/virtualteams.htm)



## Appendix 3

### Broken Squares

#### Goals

- To analyze certain aspects of cooperation in solving a group problem.
- To sensitize the participants to some of their own behaviours, which may contribute toward, or obstruct, the solving of a group problem.

#### Group Size

Any number of groups of six participants each. There will be five participants and an observer/judge.

#### Time Required

Fifteen minutes for the exercise and fifteen minutes for discussion.

#### Materials Used

- Chalkboard, chalk, eraser, or flipchart and markers.
- Tables that will seat five participants each.
- One set of instructions for each group of five participants and one for the observer/judge.
- One set of broken squares for each group of five participants.

#### Physical Setting

Tables should be spaced far enough apart so that the various groups cannot observe the activities of other groups.

#### Process

The facilitator may wish to begin with a discussion of the meaning of cooperation; this should lead to suggestions by the groups of what is essential in successful group cooperation. These may be listed on the board, and the facilitator may introduce the exercise by indicating that the groups will conduct an experiment to test their suggestions. Basic suggestions that the facilitator may want to bring out of the groups are as follows:

1. Each individual must understand the total problem.
2. Each individual should understand how he/she can contribute toward solving the problem.
3. Each individual should be aware of the potential contributions of other individuals.
4. There is a need to recognize the problems of other individuals, in order to aid them in making their maximum contribution.

*Instructions are as follows:*

1. When the preliminary discussion is finished, the facilitator chooses an observer/judge for each group of five participants. These observers are each given a copy of their instructions. The facilitator then asks each group to distribute the envelopes from the prepared packets. The envelopes are to remain unopened until the signal to work is given.
2. The facilitator distributes a copy of the instructions to each group.
3. The facilitator then reads the instructions to the group, calling for questions or questioning groups as to their understanding of the instructions. It will be necessary for the facilitator or his/her assistants to monitor the tables during the exercise to enforce the rules that have been established in the instructions.
4. When all the groups have completed the task, the facilitator will engage the groups in a discussion of the experience. Discussion should focus on feelings more than merely relating experiences and general observations. Observations are solicited from the observer/ judges. The facilitator may want the groups to relate this experience with their "back home" situations.

## Broken Squares Instruction Sheet for Participants

### Instructions

- One member of your group will be appointed to be an Observer/Judge.
- In this packet there are five envelopes.
- Each envelope contains pieces of cardboard for forming squares.
- Each group member will receive an envelope except the Observer/Judge.
- The task of your group is to form five (5) squares of equal size.
- The task is complete when each person has a perfect square in front of him or her that is the same size as the squares in front of other group members.

### Three Important Rules

1. Group members may not communicate with other members: no talking, no pointing, no gesturing, no signaling with eyes.
2. Group members may not ask for or request a puzzle piece from another person, or in any way signal that another person is to give him a puzzle piece.
3. Members may, however, give away one or more of their pieces to another member.

### Instructions to the Observer/Judge

As a judge, make sure each participant observes these rules:

1. No talking, pointing, or any other kind of communicating among the five people in your group.
2. Participants may not take (as in "seize" or "grab") pieces from other members, but they may accept pieces that were freely given.
3. Participants may give pieces to other group members. They must give a specific piece to a specific person.
4. Participants may not simply throw their pieces into the center for others to take.
5. It is permissible for a member to give away all the pieces to his puzzle, even if he has already formed a square.

As an observer, your job is to watch how the members behave during the exercise, especially behaviours that help or hinder cooperation.

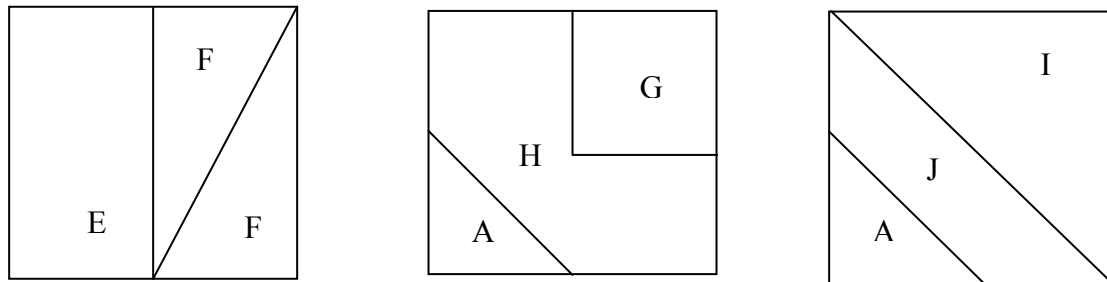
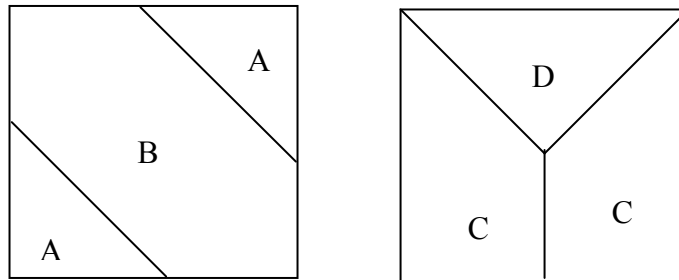
For example:

1. Who is willing to give away pieces of his/her puzzle?
2. Did anyone finish his/her puzzle and then separate him/herself from the struggles of the rest of the group?
3. Is there anyone who continually struggles with his/her pieces but yet is unwilling to give any or all of them away?
4. How many people are actively engaged in mentally putting the pieces together?
5. Does anyone become frustrated or anxious?
6. Was there a critical turning point at which time the group began to cooperate? How did that occur?
7. Did anyone try to violate the rules by talking or pointing as a means of helping fellow members solve their puzzle?

## Directions for Making the Squares for the Broken Square Exercise

One set should be provided for each group of 5 persons.

A set consists of 5 envelopes containing pieces of cardboard that have been cut into different patterns and, when properly arranged, will form 5 squares of equal size. To prepare a set, cut 5 cardboard squares of equal size, 6" x 6". Place the squares in a row and mark them as below, penciling the letters a, b, c, and so on lightly so they can later be erased.



The lines should be so drawn that when cut out, all pieces marked *A* will be of exactly the same size, all pieces marked *C* of the same size, and so on. By using multiples of 3 inches, several combinations will be possible that will enable participants to form one or two squares, but only one combination is possible that will form 5 squares 6 x 6 inches.

After drawing the lines on the 6" x 6" squares and labeling them with lower-case letters, cut each square as marked into smaller pieces to make the parts of the puzzle.

Mark each of 5 envelopes *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, and *E*. Distribute the cardboard pieces in the 5 envelopes as follows:

- Envelope *A* has pieces *I*, *H*, *E*
- Envelope *B* has pieces *A*, *A*, *A*, *C*
- Envelope *C* has pieces *A*, *J*
- Envelope *D* has pieces *D*, *F*
- Envelope *E* has pieces *G*, *B*, *F*, *C*

Erase the penciled letter from each piece and write, instead, the appropriate envelope letter, as Envelope *A*, Envelope *B*, and so on. This will make it easy to return the pieces to the proper envelope for subsequent use.

## Appendix 4

### Team Stages

#### Forming:

- Direction is sought.
- Members fail to listen.
- Issues are discussed superficially.
- Members question each other and the leader.
- All members are encouraged to speak, leader shares information.
- Competency of members may be questioned.
- Self-doubt about fitting in may be witnessed.

#### Storming:

- Attempts are made to gain influence.
- Sub-groups may form.
- Judging is going on.
- Some avoidance to do tasks.
- Issues are questioned as to their relevance.
- Members decide on their power and with whom they will align.
- Leader is supportive and encourages honesty on issues.
- Priority of issues may be challenged openly.
- Individual achievement is discussed.

#### Norming:

- Members begin to disagree with leader.
- Members are more relaxed.
- Less challenge on issues of priority.
- Group looks to task accomplishments.
- Group compares their results to other organizational groups.
- Members may lead a discussion.
- Leader delegates and surfaces positive/negative issues openly.

#### Performing:

- Roles are clear.
- Responsibilities are discussed and outcomes, both positive and negative, are reviewed, not challenged.
- Creative problem solving occurs.
- Collaboration with others is important.
- Leaders challenge group to think more strategically and may question assumptions.

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## Appendix 5

### Lost on the Moon

Your spaceship has just crash-landed on the moon. You were scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship 200 miles away on the lighted surface of the moon, but the rough landing has ruined your ship and destroyed all the equipment on board, except for the 15 items listed below.

Your crew's survival depends on reaching the mother ship, so you must choose the most critical items available for the 200-mile trip. Your task is to rank the 15 items in terms of their importance for survival. Place "1" by the most important item, "2" by the second most important item, and so on through "15," the least important.

Then rank the fifteen items as a team and enter the ranks in the column.

Item	Your Ranking	Error Points	NASA's Ranking	Group Ranking	Error Points
Box of matches					
Food Concentrate					
50' of nylon rope					
Parachute silk					
Solar-powered portable heating unit					
Two .45 caliber pistols					
One case of dehydrated milk					
Three 100-pound tanks of oxygen					
Stellar map (of the moon's constellation)					
Self-inflating raft					
Magnetic compass					
Five gallons of water					
Signal Flares					
First-aid kit injection needles					
Solar-powered FM Receiver-Transmitter					

**Lost on the Moon**  
**Actual NASA Ranking**

<b>Item</b>	<b>NASA's Ranking</b>
Box of matches	15
Food Concentrate	4
50 feet of nylon rope	6
Parachute silk	8
Solar-powered portable heating unit	13
Two .45 caliber pistols	11
One case of dehydrated milk	12
Three 100-pound tanks of oxygen	1
Stellar map (of the moon's constellation)	3
Self-inflating raft	9
Magnetic compass	14
Five gallons of water	2
Signal Flares	10
First-aid kit injection needles	7
Solar-powered FM Receiver-Transmitter	5