



## Group Dynamics and Working Together

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**G**roup dynamics refers to a field of inquiry dedicated to achieving knowledge about the nature of group, the laws of their development and their interrelations with individually other groups and larger institutions. It also associated with the interactions and processes that occur within a group (Cartwright & Zander, 1968).

Father of Group Dynamics is Kurt Lewin. He mentions the concept of group dynamics in his Book - "A Dynamic theory of Personality".

### Why People Join Groups

- **Security:** Reduce the insecurity of "standing alone", feel stronger, fewer self-doubts and more resistant to threats.
- **Status:** Inclusion in a group viewed by outsiders as important, provides recognition and status.
- **Self-esteem:** Provides feelings of self-worth to group members, in addition to conveying status to outsiders.
- **Affiliation:** Fulfills social needs & enjoys regular interaction, group can be primary source for fulfilling need for affiliation.
- **Power:** What cannot be achieved individually often becomes possible by support of other group members.
- **Goal achievement:** Some tasks require more than one person, need to pool talents, knowledge or power to complete the job.

### Individual Vs Group Approach

Individual Approach	Group Approach
• More efficient	• More effective
• High Speed	• More information and knowledge
• No meetings	• Regular meetings
• No discussions	• Diversity of views
• Clear accountability	• Higher-quality decisions

### Stages of Group Formation

Group formation is a systematic process through which individuals come together, interact, develop relationships and work collectively to achieve common goals. Understanding the stages of group formation is essential in areas such as agricultural extension, rural development, organizational management, education and community development because effective group functioning improves cooperation, participation and productivity.

The most widely accepted model explaining group development was proposed by Bruce Tuckman in 1965. According to him, groups pass through **five sequential stages**, namely:

1. Forming
2. Storming

3. Norming
4. Performing
5. Adjourning

These stages describe how a group evolves from its creation to completion of its task.

#### **Forming Stage (Orientation Stage)**

The forming stage is the initial phase of group development where individuals come together for the first time. Members are generally unfamiliar with each other and try to understand the purpose, structure and expectations of the group.

##### **Characteristics:**

- Members introduce themselves and share background information.
- Individuals experience uncertainty and anxiety.
- Roles and responsibilities are unclear.
- Dependence on leader for guidance is high.

#### **Storming Stage (Conflict Stage)**

The storming stage is characterized by conflict, disagreement, and competition among group members. As individuals begin expressing opinions openly, differences in attitudes, values, and expectations emerge.

##### **Characteristics:**

- Competition for roles and influence.
- Resistance to group control.
- Formation of sub-groups.
- Emotional tension and disagreements.

#### **Norming Stage (Integration Stage)**

After conflicts are resolved, the group enters the norming stage where **cohesion and cooperation develop**. Members begin to accept one another and establish shared norms and values.

##### **Characteristics:**

- Development of group identity.
- Increased trust and cooperation.
- Acceptance of leadership.
- Clear roles and responsibilities.
- Establishment of behavioural norms.

#### **Performing Stage (Functional Stage)**

The performing stage represents the **highest level of group maturity and productivity**. At this stage, the group functions efficiently toward achieving its objectives.

##### **Characteristics:**

- Strong cooperation among members.
- High level of commitment.
- Effective communication.
- Problem-solving orientation.
- Task accomplishment becomes priority.

#### **Adjourning Stage (Termination Stage)**

The adjourning stage occurs when the group has successfully completed its task or achieved its objectives. Temporary groups particularly experience this phase.

##### **Characteristics:**

- Completion of assigned tasks.
- Evaluation of group performance.
- Emotional responses such as satisfaction or sadness.
- Roles and responsibilities are unclear.
- Dissolution of group structure.

#### **What is Norm?**

- ✓ **Norms** are informal rules of conduct for behaviors considered important by most group members (Feldman, 1984).

- ✓ **Conformity** is good when norms help a group control and influence its members' behavior so that the group can accomplish its goals (Robbins & Judge, 2017).
- ✓ **Deviance** occurs when a member of a group violates a group norm (Robbins & Judge, 2017).
- ✓ **Compliance** refers to changing one's behavior at the request or direction of another person and some requests can be direct, but sometimes it also involves more indirect forms of social influence (Milgram, 1963).
- ✓ **Obedience** is a form of social influence that involves performing an action under the orders of an authority figure (Milgram, 1963).

## Conflict And Its Management

**Conflict** is a state of disagreement or opposition between individuals, groups, organizations, etc... often resulting in tension, struggle or disruption.

### Conflict Resolution Techniques

Conflict resolution involves managing disagreements constructively so that mutually acceptable solutions can be achieved without damaging relationships. Various techniques are used depending on the nature of conflict, urgency of the situation, and relationship among members.

**Avoiding Technique:** Avoiding occurs when one or both parties choose not to address the conflict immediately. Individuals withdraw from the situation or postpone discussion to prevent escalation.

This technique is useful when:

- The issue is minor or temporary.
- Emotions are highly intense.
- More time is needed for reflection.

However, continuous avoidance may allow problems to accumulate and worsen over time. Therefore, it should be used cautiously and only as a temporary strategy.

**Accommodating Technique:** In accommodation, one party gives up its own concerns to satisfy the interests of the other party. The main objective is to maintain harmony and preserve relationships.

This technique is appropriate when:

- The issue is more important to the other person.
- Maintaining cooperation is essential.
- Long-term relationships are prioritized over short-term gains.

Although accommodation promotes goodwill, excessive use may lead to dissatisfaction or reduced confidence among members who consistently compromise their interests.

**Competing Technique:** The competing technique involves pursuing one's own interests at the expense of others. It represents a high level of assertiveness and low cooperation, often resulting in a win-lose situation.

This approach is suitable when:

- Quick and decisive action is required.
- Important rules or ethical standards must be enforced.
- Emergency decisions are necessary.

While effective in urgent situations, frequent use of competition may damage relationships and reduce group cohesion.

**Compromising Technique:** Compromising occurs when both parties give up part of their demands to reach a mutually acceptable solution. Each side gains something but also sacrifices something.

This technique is useful when:

- Parties have equal power.
- Time constraints exist.
- Temporary solutions are acceptable.

Compromise promotes fairness and cooperation; however, it may not always produce the best or most innovative solution since neither party fully achieves its objectives.

**Collaborating Technique:** Collaboration is considered the most effective conflict resolution technique. In this approach, both parties work together to identify underlying problems and develop solutions that satisfy everyone's interests.

This technique involves:

- Open communication
- Mutual respect
- Joint problem-solving
- Shared decision-making

Although collaboration requires time and effort, it strengthens trust, improves understanding and enhances group effectiveness.

## References

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