

# TUCKMAN'S STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

## Stages of Group Development

These stages are commonly known as: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning. Tuckman's model explains that as the team develops maturity and ability, relationships establish, and leadership style changes to more collaborative or shared leadership.

Tuckman's original work simply described the way he had observed groups evolve, whether they were conscious of it or not. In CORAL, the real value is in recognizing where a team is in the developmental stage process, and assisting the team to enter a stage consistent with the collaborative work put forth. In the real world, teams are often forming and changing, and each time that happens, they can move to a different Tuckman Stage. A group might be happily Norming or Performing, but a new member might force them back into Storming, or a team member may miss meetings causing the team to fall back into Storming. Project guides will be ready for this, and will help the team get back to Performing as quickly as possible.

## Forming

The initial forming stage is the process of putting the structure of the team together. Team members feel ambiguous and conflict is avoided at all costs due to the need to be accepted into the group. Team members look to a group leader for direction and guidance, usually CORAL project guides.

### Observable Behaviors

- Politeness
- Tentative joining
- Orienting with others personally
- Avoids controversy
- Cliques may form
- Need for safety and approval
- Attempts to define tasks, processes, and how it will be decided here

- Discussion of problems not relevant to the task

## Feelings and Thoughts

- Many feel excited, optimistic, and full of anticipation
- Others may feel suspicious, fearful, and anxious working with others
- What is expected of me
- Why are they here
- Uncertainty and Apprehension

## Team Needs

- Team mission and vision
- Establish specific objectives and tasks
- Identify roles and responsibilities of team members
- Establish team ground rules
- Team member expectations
- Operational guidelines for team
- Effective in class meetings
- Effective Chat meetings
- 1st set of feedback from project guides

## Leadership Required

- Project Guides & Instructors
- provide structure and task direction
- Allow for get-acquainted time
- Create an atmosphere of confidence and optimism
- Active involvement
- Team members believe an appointed leader necessary to make decisions
- One-way communication from leader to team-members

**To advance** from this stage to the next stage, each member must relinquish the comfort zone of non-threatening topics and risk the possibility of conflict.

## Storming

This stage begins to occur as the process of organizing tasks and processes surface interpersonal conflicts. Leadership, power, and structural issues dominate this stage.

## Observable Behaviors

- Arguing among members
- Vying for leadership
- Differences in points of view and personal style are evident
- Lack of role clarity
- Team organizing itself
- Power struggles and clashes
- Lack of consensus-seeking behaviors
- Lack of progress
- Establishes unrealistic goals
- Concern over excessive work

## Feelings & Thoughts

- Feel Defensive
- Confusion, loss of interest can result
- Resistance to tasks
- Fluctuations in attitude about the team
- Unsure if I agree with teams mission and purpose
- Question the wisdom of team members
- Increase in tension and jealousy
- Unsure about my personal influence and freedom in the team
- We're not getting anywhere

## Team Needs

- Inter & intra personal relationships
- Identify stylistic and personal differences
- Effective listening
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Conflict resolution
- Clarify and understand the team's purpose
- Reestablish roles and ground rules
- How to deal with 'some' team members violating team codes of conduct
- Receiving Feedback from project guide

## Leadership Required

- Project guide & Instructors acknowledge conflict
- Project Guides suggest that consensus among team members

- Get members to assume more task responsibility
- Concept of Shared Leadership emerges
- Teach conflict resolution methods
- Offer support and praise
- Actively involved Team members begin consulting one another – shared leadership emerging but have difficulty with decision making

**In order to progress** to the next stage, group members must move from a "testing and proving" mentality to a problem-solving mentality. The most important trait in helping teams move to the next stage is the ability of team members to listen to their team mates - what are they trying to say?

## Norming

In this stage, team members are creating new ways of doing and being together. As the group develops cohesion, leadership changes from 'one' teammate in charge to shared leadership. Team members learn they have to trust one another for shared leadership to be effective.

### Observable Behaviors

- Processes and procedures are agreed upon
- Comfortable with relationships
- Focus and energy on tasks
- Effective conflict resolution skills
- Sincere attempt to make consensual decisions
- Balanced influence, shared problem solving
- Develop team routines
- Sets and achieves task milestones

### Feelings & Thoughts

- Sense of belonging to a team
- Confidence is high
- Team members feel a new ability to express criticism constructively
- Acceptance of all members in the team
- General sense of trust
- Assured that everything is going to work out okay
- Freedom to express and contribute

### Team Needs

- Develop a decision making process
- Be prepared to offer ideas and suggestions
- Problem solving is shared
- Utilizing all resources to support the team effort
- Team members take responsibility in shared leadership skills
- Receiving Feedback from project guides

## Leadership Required

- Shared leadership
- Give feedback and support from Project Guides
- Allow for less structure
- Promotes team interaction
- Asks for contributions from all team members
- Collaboration becomes clearer
- Encouraging others in making decisions
- Continues to build strong relationships

**The major task function of stage three** is the data flow between group members: They share feelings and ideas, solicit and give feedback to one another, and explore actions related to the task. Creativity is high. Collaboration emerges during this stage when team work ethic and shared leadership is understood.

**The major drawback** of the norming stage is that members may begin to fear the inevitable future breakup of the team; they may resist change of any sort.

## Performing

True interdependence is the norm of this stage of group development. The team is flexible as individuals adapt to meet the needs of other team members. This is a highly productive stage both personally and professionally.

## Observable Behaviors

- Fully functional teams
- Roles are clearer
- Team develops independence
- Team able to organize itself
- Flexible members function well individually, in subgroups or as a team
- Better understand each other's strengths and weaknesses and insights into group processes

## Feelings & Thoughts

- Empathy for one another
- High commitment
- Begin understanding collaborative work ethic
- Tight bonds emerge
- Fun and excitement
- Lots of personal development and creativity
- General sense of satisfaction
- Continual discovery of how to sustain feelings of momentum and enthusiasm

## Team Needs

- Project guides assure team is moving in collaborative direction
- Maintain team flexibility
- Measure knowledge performance – post test
- Provide information
- Giving and Receiving
- Feedback and Dialogue with project guides

## Leadership Required

- Shared Leadership being practiced
- Observing, Inquiring, Fulfilling, team needs
- Collaborative efforts among team members
- Project guides provides little direction
- Team members offer positive reinforcement and support
- Share new information

**The Performing stage** is not reached by all groups. If group members are able to evolve to stage four, their capacity, range, and depth of personal relations expand to true interdependence. In this stage, people can work independently, in subgroups, or as a total unit with equal competencies.

## Adjourning

In this stage typically team members are ready to leave (course termination) causing significant change to the team structure, membership, or purpose and the team during the last week of class. They experience change and transition. While

the group continues to perform productively they also need time to manage their feelings of termination and transition.

### **Observable Behaviors**

- Visible signs of grief
- Momentum slows down
- Restless Behavior
- Bursts of extreme energy usually followed by lack of energy

### **Feelings & Thoughts**

- Sadness
- Humor (that to outsiders could appear cruel)
- Glad it is over – relief

### **Team Needs**

- Evaluate the efforts of the team
- Tie up loose ends and tasks
- Recognize and reward team efforts

### **Leadership Required**

- Project guides help team develop options for termination
- Good listening
- Reflection and carry forth collaborative learning to next opportunity

**The final stage, adjourning,** involves the termination of task behaviors and disengagement from relationships. A planned conclusion usually includes recognition for participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say personal goodbyes. Concluding a group can create some apprehension – in effect, a minor crisis. The termination of the group is a regressive movement from giving up control to giving up inclusion in the group.