



Stages of Group Development

Parents as Collaborative Leaders Module 4

A collaborative research project hosted by the University of
Vermont and the PACER Center

Objectives



- Learn about the four stages of team development
- Recognize the characteristics and challenges encountered at each stage of development
- Learn about ways in which team leaders and other members can help teams move through the stages of team development

Essential Questions



- *What are the stages of team development, and in what ways does knowledge of these stages help team members to promote more effective collaborative processes?*
- *What strategies can team leaders and other team members use to help teams move through the stages of team development?*

Agenda



- *Opening reflection on team development (10 minutes)*
- *Overview of the stages of team development (40 minutes)*
 - Forming, storming, norming, and performing
- *Closing questions and discussion (10 minutes)*

Reflecting on Positive and Challenging Team Experiences



- Think about a team of which you are a member, and which attempts to be a collaborative team.
- Is your team one that you would describe as being primarily *positive* or *challenging*?
- What examples can you share to illustrate both positive and challenging experiences?

Four Stages of Group Development



- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing

Stage One: Forming



- **Definition:** Stage 1 teams are generally new teams that are learning how to work together
- **Characteristics of stage 1 teams:** Members tend to be tentative and polite and to have little conflict
- **Critical skills and activities:** Stage 1 teams need to identify their purpose, develop group norms, identify group processes, define roles, build relationships and trust
- **Role of facilitator/leader:** Stage 1 teams usually need a strong leader who can help the team go through its forming activities

Storming



- **Definition:** Stage 2 teams have moved past the early forming stages and are now encountering some disagreements and/or conflict. This is natural, but teams need to find effective ways to handle conflict before they can move on to stage 3.
- **Group characteristics:** Members of stage 2 teams tend to exhibit increased conflict, less conformity and “jockeying” for power.
- **Critical skills and activities:** Stage 2 teams need to learn how to resolve conflict; clarify their roles, power, and structure; and build consensus through re-visiting purpose.
- **Role of leader(s):** Stage 2 teams need leaders and other team members who are willing to identify issues and resolve conflict.

Norming



- **Definition:** Stage 3 teams have successfully moved out of the storming stage and are ready to move to a higher level of communication and problem-solving.
- **Group characteristics:** Members of stage 3 teams demonstrate an improved ability to complete tasks, solve problems, resolve conflict.
- **Critical skills and activities:** Stage 3 teams need to learn to engage in more sophisticated problem-solving and decision-making, continue the use of effective strategies for conflict resolution and take greater levels of responsibility for their roles
- **Role of leader(s):** In stage 3, leaders become less directive, team members feel empowered, and multiple leaders emerge

Performing



- **Definition:** Stage 4 teams are at the highest level of performance and can process their strengths and weaknesses while accomplishing their goals.
- **Group characteristics:** In stage 4, the team takes a flexible approach to roles and structures depending on the task at hand. The team is able to evaluate its effectiveness and views conflict is viewed as an opportunity. Stage 4 teams tend to be energetic, creative, and fun!
- **Critical skills and activities:** Stage 4 teams need to hold high expectations for their performance. They often use sub-groups as well as the large group for decision-making and task completion. Teams also recognize the need to ensure that all members are in agreement with the role and purpose of sub-groups.
- **Role of Leader:** In a stage 4 team, it's often difficult to identify the leader, because everyone is sharing in leadership.

Closing



- What parts of this presentation have been most helpful to you?
- How might you apply your knowledge of the stages of development to your work?

Source



- Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2003). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals (4th ed.)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Thousand, J., & Villa, R. (1992). Collaborative teams: A powerful tool in restructuring. In R. Villa, J. Thousand, W. Stainback, & S. Stainback (Eds.) *Restructuring for caring and effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.