

Small Group Leadership

GOAL:

To gain knowledge and skill in working with groups; group dynamics, tasks, roles and processes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing this module participants will be able to:

- a)
 - i) outline the stages of group development
 - ii) describe group membership/leadership roles
 - iii) describe a variety of ways of leading
 - iv) identify problem solving and conflict resolution methods
- b)
 - i) explain why a group goes through different stages
 - ii) give examples of membership/leadership roles in a group
 - iii) explain the differences in styles of leadership
 - iv) compare different problem solving and conflict resolution methods
- c)
 - i) analyse the dynamics of an existing group, evaluate their own effectiveness and consider changes necessary to ensure optimum functioning
 - ii) demonstrate the ability to use different styles of leadership in different situations
 - iii) show that they can use a range of problem solving and conflict resolution techniques.

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What to Do

Step One	Personal Experience	1.5 hours
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- 1) Choose a group to which you belong. Describe the group as it is now. Use words, pictures, diagrams, or any other medium you choose. Now answer the following questions:
 - a) Has the group changed since you first joined? How?
 - b) Who are the leaders? How do you know?
 - c) How does each member contribute to the group?
 - d) How does the group usually deal with a conflict?
 - e) Discuss this with your mentor
- 2) While with your mentor choose a particular group meeting and:
 - a) Briefly describe the meeting
 - b) Recall your feelings through the course of the meeting and list them, noting beside each one what you remember happening at the time.
 - c) Choose an image or metaphor for the way the group was for you that session. (eg after a very argumentative session, the image might be that of a storm.)
- 3) Describe four actions that you remember a leader taking that helped you to participate in a group.

Step Two	Information about Groups	2 hours
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- 4) Read sections 1-3 of the resource material (pp 4-5)
 - a) Draw a line, mark it at evenly spaced intervals with the stages of group development. Mark the point that you think your group has reached. Explain your reasons for your choice.
- 5) Read sections 4-6 of the resource material (pp 6-9)
 - a) What roles are evident in your group? Is anything missing?
 - b) What Leadership Styles can you identify in your group? Describe an occasion when each style has been used.
 - c) Which of the decision making methods is most commonly experienced in your group? Why do you think this is?
- 6) Check your responses with a group member, and then discuss with your mentor. Summarise this information in a way that shows your understanding of group life cycles, different styles of leadership and different roles within the group. Present this on 2 sides of A4 paper or equivalent.

Step Three	Understanding Groups	3 hours
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- 7) With the permission of your group, complete the Group Function Check List (Section 7, p10) after a meeting. Review your responses with your mentor and record your learnings.
- 8) Using the questionnaire, score sheet and explanation in Section 15 (pp 17 - 24) of the resource material, identify your own preferred style of group interaction.

Step Four	Practice	13.5 hours
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Read sections 8 - 14 (pp 11-16)

- 9) Attend a group of which you are not usually a member, and record what you see on the

Observation Sheet (p 25)

You will need to negotiate what you are doing with the group, explaining why you are doing it, what you will do with the information, and what you expect of the group. The session should be at least 1.5 hours, and you should be there before people begin arriving, and among the last to leave.

10)

- a) In a group in which you are a leader, complete this exercise:
 - i) attend four meetings of at least 1.5 hours
 - ii) ask a person to act as observer using the Observation Sheet on page 25
 - iii) in the final meeting (of the four) lead a feedback session. Use the material in section 7 to design a sheet to hand out to group members.
- b) Describe what you have learnt about your own leadership styles and the functions of your group. Your response should be at least one page.

11) Discuss with your mentor how you would cater for different personality styles in your group. (Reread sections 6 and 15 if necessary)

- a) Describe two events involving conflict or the resolution of a problem that have arisen in your group. (They must be events in which you took an active part.) Include in your description the context, what happened, the resolution techniques you were trying to use, how effective you were, and what you would do differently next time. Each event should take 1-2 A4 sheets to describe.

This is technically called a verbatim, and is a useful tool to help you reflect on your own and others' roles in a given situation.

Resource Material

1. Personal needs

Inclusion, Control and Affection are three things that impact on us in a group.

Being included:

- Who are the members of this group ?
- Will I fit in?
- What will it cost me to join ?
- How much of my time and energy is it going to take to fit in?

Control:

- Who has the power in this group?
- What is required of me?
- Can people say what they really think?

Affection:

- How open can I be in this group?
- Is there an atmosphere of affection and respect?
- What if nobody likes me?
- What happens if strong relationships develop?
- Does it matter if not everyone likes each other?

This is often the sequence as a group forms: Inclusion, control, affection. When a group moved towards closure the opposite happens. As people become aware that there is no future for the group, people withdraw emotionally, issues of control reemerge and the sense of belonging disappears.

2. Group needs

There are also three basic group needs; the task, the individual members and maintaining the group life.

A group is rather like a three legged stool.

If any of these three are missing, it falls over.



Task: Most groups have some task confronting them. Having a task to do will not guarantee that the group will survive, but losing sight of a common goal will be equally disruptive. The task includes; a clearly understood goal, a way of working towards the goal, and a way to recognise when it is achieved.

Individual: Every individual member is important in the group. Individual needs are frequently overlooked in the enthusiasm for the task. A businesslike chair of a meeting may get through the agenda, but the meeting may be a frustrating ineffective experience because a meeting is more than the content. Each person comes with their own needs, which may include the need to belong and contribute, to have status and power, for acceptance and freedom, for the recognition of problems.

Group Maintenance. As people work together on a common task, they are also doing something to and with each other. Consequently, a group consists of a constantly changing network of interactions and relationships. A group needs to have a growing awareness of itself as a group, and to face the need of maintaining the relationships within it if the task is to

be accomplished. Maintenance refers to what is happening to people as the task is being accomplished.

Ideas need to be able to be freely exchanged and members need to know what is going on for each other. Group maintenance requires;

- understanding between members,
- co-operation facilitated between members,
- member support even when in disagreement
- the need for clarity.

These three areas of group life overlap. A strong group will be one where the whole group shares responsibility for what is going on.

3. Group Life Cycles

A group characteristically goes through a life-cycle in its movement to maturity and this needs to be matched by changing methods of leadership.

1. Getting Started (Birth Stage): This stage starts with the idea of forming a group and goes through the enrolment of group members, preparation and holding the first meeting, agreement on purpose, agenda and initial processes. Group members are likely to feel anticipation, excitement, nervousness, or shyness.

2. Getting Comfortable (Early Childhood Stage): Group members get to know one another, remind one another of common friends, family and workmates, and establish areas of similarity in beliefs and values, hopes, fears and experiences. The group is likely to establish group roles (facilitator, recorder) at this stage. Group members begin to feel warmth and friendship towards one another as well as acceptance and growing trust.

3. Getting to Work (Schooldays Stage) This is the stage where the group begins to get down to work, allocates tasks, and group members make commitments. In a support group the sharing and trust deepens. Group members feel willing and keen to contribute and establish their presence. Some may begin to experience irritation with the pace of the group (too fast or slow) and with some other participants. Usually this will be commented on to other participants outside the group setting.

4. Getting to be "right" (Teenage Adjustment Stage) This is the stage when differences emerge, challenges are made, conflicts arise, are worked through or left to fester, and people either honour or don't honour their commitments. Personalities have now become more defined, alliances and factions formed and 'positions' taken. Limits on tasks may be set, purpose and processes may be redefined. Some group members may feel frustrated, angry, repressed, overworked, unappreciated, unhappy or turned off. Other group members may feel powerful and that they are 'winning' or getting their point across. A group member may leave the group or wish they could leave.

5. Getting to synergy (Maturity Stage): Group members recommit to the group purpose at a deeper level, recognising that the group is more than the individual personalities with all their foibles. Group members allow room for their own and others' baggage and take responsibility for their own response when something happens in the group to upset or distract them (when they get 'triggered' or 'tripped up'). They stop making each other wrong. The group establishes ways to strengthen group identity, acknowledges successes, accepts differences and resolves conflicts. The group clarifies specific outcomes which will be achieved in stated time frames. Support systems are set up to ensure success. Group members feel empowered, excited and a strong sense of belonging.

6. Ending (Fulfilment and Completion Stage): The group purpose is fulfilled and the tasks completed. In some cases the purpose may not have been fulfilled, but circumstances have altered and the group has ended anyway. The group may hold an evaluation session to assess its own effectiveness and draw out the learning. Group members acknowledge their own and others' contribution. Members feel satisfied or dissatisfied, compete or not complete. They will often be nostalgic, emotional, or may not want the group to finish. Some members may be relieved.

Note: Most groups do not move from Stage 4 to Stage 5. They either stay at stage 4 or lapse into a Withdrawal stage. Group members may find working together a struggle or boring, but keep it going anyway. The fun has gone, and they stop challenging each other and just do what has to be done.

Hunter, Bailey and Taylor: *The Zen of Groups*, Tandem Press: Birkenhead, 1992. Pp 30-32

4. Leadership functions

These are ways in which any person can contribute to the effectiveness of the group. When any of these functions are omitted, the effectiveness of the group declines.

FUNCTIONS THAT HELP MAINTAIN THE GROUP

Encouraging: Being friendly, warm, responsive to others, helping others to contribute, praising others and their ideas, agreeing with and accepting the contributions of others.

Gate Opening: Trying to make it possible for another member to make a contribution to the group by e.g. saying, "We haven't heard anything from Jim yet," or suggesting limited talking time for everyone so that all will have a chance to be heard.

Standard Setting: reminding the group to avoid decisions which conflict with group standards.

Listening: Hearing each members contribution carefully and respectfully, serving as audience during discussion and decision making.

Expressing Group Feeling: Summarising how the group seems to feel about a certain issue, describing reactions of the group to ideas or solutions; seeking the group response.

FUNCTIONS THAT HELP GROUP TASK

Initiating Activity: Helping the group get started; proposing solutions; suggesting new ideas, new definitions of the problem, new attack on the problem or new organisation of what has already been discussed.

Seeking Information: Asking for clarification of suggestions that have been made, requesting additional information or facts that will help.

Seeking Opinion: Helping the group find out what people think or feel about what is being discussed, seeking further clarification of opinions offered.

Giving Information: Offering facts or additional useful information, relating one's own experience to group problem to illustrate points.

Giving Opinion: Stating an opinion or belief concerning a suggestion or one of several suggestions, expressing what one thinks or feels rather than offering further facts.

Elaborating: Offering further clarification of points; trying to 'spell out' what other members have already said, or trying to help the group imagine how a proposal would work if adopted.

Summarising: Pulling together related ideas or suggestions, restating suggestions after the group has discussed them; or trying to organise the ideas so the group will know what it has said.

Testing Workability: Making application of suggestions to real situations, examining practicality and workability of ideas, trying to help the group test a proposed decision for workability.

BOTH GROUP TASK AND GROUP MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS

Evaluating: Submitting group decisions or accomplishments to comparison with group standards, measuring accomplishments against goals.

Diagnosing: Determining sources of difficulty, appropriate steps to take next, the main blocks to the work and effectiveness of the group.

Testing for Consensus: Tentatively asking for group opinions in order to find out if the group is nearing consensus on a decision, sending up trial balloons to test group opinions.

Mediating: Harmonising: trying to provide compromises for opposing points of view, trying to reconcile differences in the group, or seeking a common ground so the group can continue working.

Relieving Tensions: Draining off negative feelings by jesting or pouring oil on troubled waters, putting a tense situation in a wider context.

5. Leadership styles: different ways of leading

Three primary styles of leadership are **autocratic**, **laissez faire** and **functional**. The leadership required by a group changes as the group moves through its life cycle. Leadership is best thought of as a function rather than a person. It is any action that helps a group move towards its goal and maintain its life.

Autocratic Leadership: when the leader fulfils all the leadership functions.

Laissez-faire leadership: when the designated leader appears not to be fulfilling leadership functions.

Functional leadership: when all members are sharing leadership functions with the designated leader. In some situations there may be no designated leader.

Who takes leadership depends on the composition of the group, and is affected by factors such as age, skill and maturity. An adult working with eight year olds takes a greater responsibility for the group than does an older adult working with 20 year olds.

An immature group is characterised by all the leadership functions being left to one person. This may be the official leader or a strong person in the group. Members may expect this and like it, yet react against dominating behaviours. In the early life of a group it may well be appropriate for one person to hold so much of the leadership. To describe a group as immature is not judgmental, but a comment on its stage of formation.

A dependent group is one that depends on a leader to perform all the necessary tasks to maintain group life. This produces autocratic leadership. In certain groups there is a time for autocratic leadership, especially when there is a threat to safety. However, wherever possible it is better to encourage group members to take responsibility for themselves and each other.

In a Mature Group members share responsibility for providing leadership functions.

Members can perform different functions at different times. Responsible membership is possible with younger people, leadership can be shared and the ways that leadership may be expressed will be age appropriate.

Leadership functions shared by the group result in :

- a larger reservoir of skills (task and maintenance needs)
- greater member satisfaction through worthwhile contribution (individual and maintenance needs)
- no "boss" or "clique of bosses" creating division in the group (maintenance)

A designated leader provides a cluster of leadership functions in a group as it begins its life but then allows and encourages members to assume leadership responsibilities to the full extent of their insight and skills.

At the beginning of a groups life the leader may enter the group with the responsibility of suggesting structure, procedure and even the goals, and allows the group the freedom to examine these and maybe even make changes so they become "owned" by the group. Such ownership brings involvement and commitment. This path avoids imposition of the leader's will and also the chaos that can come with long term "laissez-faire" leadership.

As the meeting progresses and the group matures, members assume more and more leadership functions and the need for the designated leader to provide these diminishes. This will rarely be a steady progression and is more likely to vary from step to step in a group's life. It is to be expected that when a group comes under stress, it will turn to the "designated" leader to take more of the leadership functions.

6. Decision making

SOME TYPES OF DECISION MAKING.

Minority Rule.

Self authorised decision: One person assumes authority to make decisions. This can be helpful in some situations. At other times the group can distance itself from the decision. If it becomes a pattern the group can lose a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Hand-clasping: This is a decision made by at least two people in a group, who collude to make a decision. This collusion may not be conscious.

Sub-group: A small caucus makes a decision without consulting the others

Majority rule.

This is a common process within western culture, whereby the majority holds all power. It is convenient, but creates a minority, which are opposed to the decision. It can also focus on "parties" rather than the merits of a particular argument.

Unanimous decision: Unanimity is seldom achieved and can take considerable time and patience. It can also pressurise individuals to agree in order to achieve an outcome.

Consensus: All points are discussed, and everyone is heard; everyone can live with the decision that is made. Consensus process produces good results but is not easy. It requires mature group membership and careful attention to process.

EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING.

Effective decision making happens when everyone feels that their point of view is taken seriously and attended to and that their feelings are respected. Process is often more important than the particular outcome.

Checklist for effective decision making;

- State the problem clearly.
- Test for understanding. Be sure everyone understands the task.
- Encourage the expression of all points of view.
- Determine what information may still be needed before the decision is made.
- Find out the necessary information.
- Focus the group on the central task of the decision making.
- Probe for further matters that need to be discussed.
- Experiment with a trial decision. This may be "imagine if.." or may involve a temporary decision before confirming.
- Move from "sharing" to consensus and decision.



7. Group functions' check list

The purpose of this exercise is to sharpen your observation of the various behaviours that help groups work more effectively. Sometimes these are called Leadership Functions, but you will see that they can be provided by any member. For each person in the group, copy this page and mark the appropriate behaviour(s) below.

Name

Role

Group Task Functions

- ë initiator
- ë information seeker
- ë information giver
- ë clarifier
- ë consensus tester
- ë summariser

Group Maintenance Functions

- ë encourager
- ë harmoniser
- ë gate keeper
- ë compromiser
- ë norm setter
- ë feeling expresser

8. Four Quadrants: Awareness in Interpersonal Relations

Self knowledge and knowledge of others provide an important interplay in the life of a group. This can be expressed by imagining four quadrants:

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	1. Area of open activity	2. Blind area
Not known to others	3. Avoided or hidden area	4. Area of unknown activity

Quadrant 1. Area of open activity, refers to behaviours and motives that are known to the individual and those around.

Quadrant 2. Blind area, are those things others see in an individual that they cannot see for themselves.

Quadrant 3. Avoided or hidden areas, refers to things that a person knows about but does not let others see or know.

Quadrant 4. Area of unknown activity, are behaviours and motives that no one knows about. Their existence is discovered over time as they become revealed

In a new group quadrant 1 generally represents a small amount of knowledge and as a result spontaneous interaction is limited. With time this quadrant expands and as a result people generally become freer with each other. A lot of "ice-breaking" exercises effectively expand this area quickly. The expansion of quadrant 1 usually leads to shrinking of quadrant 3 with the growth of mutual trust and common experience. Quadrant 2 can take longer, as there is usually good reason for hiding things from ourselves. Life experience has taught us to remain cut off from certain aspects of ourselves. Quadrant 4 is generally the slowest to change.

Some insights emerging from the quadrants:

- A change in one quadrant will affect all quadrants
- Hiding, denying or being blind to certain behaviours uses energy, which is then not available for group interaction.
- Trust encourages increased awareness
- Self awareness can grow with appropriate activities, but cannot be forced.
- A small first quadrant suggests poor communication between group members.
- Pakeha culture discourages expressing curiosity about what others choose not to reveal. This can inhibit the growth of trust and interpersonal knowledge.
- It is important to be sensitive to the choice of a group member not to reveal a hidden area.
- Reflection on group processes can enhance the development of interpersonal knowledge and communication within the group.

9. Feedback

Feedback is a description of how a particular action or event impacts on one individual, or how they see it impacting on the group. Feedback is most helpful when it:

- a) describes the behaviour to be commented on neutrally. "John, when you checked to see if I had finished..."
- b) describes the reaction "...I felt valued, thank you"

Negative feedback continues to describe what would have been preferred:

- c) "John when you changed the conversation to tomorrow's programme while I was still discussing the accident this evening, I felt put down and wished you had waited until I had finished"

This process means the person giving feedback is taking responsibility for their own feelings and reaction, and is providing a very clear focus and a signal about what would be helpful. This avoids the two major problems with feedback:

- personal attack: when the person is focussed on rather than the behaviour;
- generalisation: when it is not clear quite what is being addressed or what alternative would be helpful.

CATEGORIES

Conscious: nodding assent,	or	unconscious: falling asleep
Spontaneous: "thanks a lot".	or	solicited: "Yes, it did help"
Verbal: "No";	or	non-verbal: leaving the room.
Formal: evaluation questionnaire;	or	informal: hand-clapping.

EFFECTS

- Reinforcement: Feedback may confirm behaviour by encouraging its repetition "You really helped me, when you clarified."
- Correction: Feedback may help bring behaviour in line with intention "It would have helped me more if you had stood up to talk."
- Identification: Feedback may help identify persons and their relationship "Joe, I thought we were enemies, but we are not, are we?"

CRITERIA:

Constructive feedback is descriptive, specific, appropriate, usable, requested, timely, checked with the receiver, and with others present, and occurs within a relationship of trust.

Descriptive: What is offered for feedback should be what you saw, heard, and felt; not what you think the other person is feeling or intending because that is unknown. Further, by describing one's own reaction, the individual is left free to respond as they see fit. It reduces the likelihood of a defensive reaction.

Specific: Generalisations such as "You are always dominating" are unhelpful and often arguable. A more helpful phrase would be; "During that debate you told the meeting that 'the opposing point of view could not be presented' which left me feeling compelled to go along with your point of view"

Appropriate: The needs of both the receiver and the giver are taken into account, reducing the risk of being destructive rather than creative.

Usable: The feedback is directed towards behaviour that the receiver can do something about. Frustration is only increased when actions are pointed to which the person has no control over.

Requested: Feedback is most creative when it is requested rather than imposed on someone. This is further helped when the receiver determines the form that is most preferred for the feedback. This can be helped by discussing the whole question of feedback early in the life of a group so people can say how they would like to receive it, before a particular situation arises.

Timely: Given that issues of readiness and support can affect the timing of feedback, it is best offered as early as possible after the particular action has occurred.

Checked with the receiver: In giving feedback it is helpful to check the behaviour to be commented on with the receiver. If the observation has been wrong then the reaction may well be based on an imagined occurrence rather than a real one. Questions of intent always

need to be checked with the person discussed. It is also very helpful to have the receiver of feedback rephrase what they have heard to make sure it is what was intended.

Checked with the group/those present When feedback is given in a group, both giver and receiver have the opportunity to check accuracy with others.

Relationship of Trust: A trusted non threatening person helps negative feed-back be received creatively.

SERIOUS FEEDBACK

A group can usually move to a more mature, deeper level of relating when serious feedback is possible. This also helps the group to accomplish its task more efficiently and with greater commitment.

Serious feedback may well involve either levelling or confronting, or both.

Levelling: Letting another person or persons know how I feel about myself. "I am angry", "I am frightened", "I am very happy to hear about that".

Confronting: Letting another person or persons know how I feel about them; Joe; "I am trying to be helpful by explaining it" Sue; (confronting) "You really cut me off and that leaves me feeling angry".

A relationship of dialogue between persons occurs when both are levelling, both are confronting, or both are doing both.

10. Process and Data

When people communicate, **data** is collected, and a **process** occurs. Data refers to what is seen and heard when people communicate. This data is available to all present with sight and hearing. Data is perceived with our senses. However data production is only a small part of human relationship. In any encounter between two or more people, the relationship between them changes. The people involved may move closer to each other or they may move further apart. This movement is called process.

It is important for group members to be sensitive to both data and process.

CAUTIONS

It is very easy to draw inaccurate conclusions about process from observed data.

- Some of the data may be missed, eg the words may be heard but the facial expression that contradicts them is missed.
- A person may be so caught up emotionally or intellectually with the words (content) that there is insensitivity to what is happening in the relationships in the group.
- The data can be observed but a wrong inference made about the process. e.g. silence from a group member may give rise to the conclusion that they are withdrawing, however they may be working hard internally with the discussion and not feel they have an appropriate contribution to make.
- It is important people speak for themselves; "For me this is so...",
- When referring to somebody else's participation, it is helpful to identify the data that leads to our conclusions. Check interpretations of data with others, by asking others what they saw and heard and what they think it meant, and most of all checking with the main actors; "What was your attitude when...?" or "How were you seeking to function..."

When words and actions are contradictory, it is usually the latter that are believed by other participants.

11. Communication

Communication is the process of sharing and exchanging thoughts and feelings, so each knows how the other thinks and feels. Talking does not equate with communication. The message that is conceived is not necessarily the message that is perceived. All sorts of filters can distort the message, and affect the way it is received.

FILTERS

- Semantic difficulties
- Emotional - many words are loaded with emotional significance. This loading can be either cultural or personal.
- Ambiguous meaning - words can have different meanings.
- Unfamiliar words
- Verbosity - saying too much can impair understanding.
- Physical factors
- Noise, a weak or glaring light, a poor sound system cold, tooth ache, poor seating etc
- Subjective assumptions - One person may imagine that a general statement is aimed at them and become anxious. Anxiety limits the ability to listen.
- Undisclosed Agenda - In any gathering there will be the public agenda, and there will sometimes be undisclosed agendas (e.g. attending because there is networking to do with others present that has nothing to do with the purpose of the meeting). Usually there are also unconscious agendas.

AGENDAS

Open Agenda Is conscious and known to all and relevant to the group's task.

Undisclosed Agenda: Is conscious but unspoken, and often irrelevant to the group's task, and frequently impacts on achieving group goals.

Unconscious Agenda: Is unknown and is not the concern of the group, even though it has an important effect. It may be present in a number of guises;

8 Positive Involvement- the ideas are liked because the person is liked

8 Negative Involvement- The person is not liked so the ideas are rejected.

8 Anxiety about status or position. If the speaker's competence raises threats for the listeners' status or position, their message may not be heard accurately

8 Outside loyalties: commitments made to people outside the meeting determine response rather than the content of discussion in the meeting.

8 Stereotyping of particular individuals, cultural groups and so on can prevent their message being heard.

8 Pressure of immediate needs, such as another appointment, interfere with participation.

8 Suspicion of others' motives.

Some of the data that can suggest undisclosed or unconscious agenda's at work are:

Blocking, with no satisfactory explanation

Digressing, flight, withdrawal at a point where others present would most likely be in agreement

Inconsistency of argument.

12. Improving Communication

Allow time for hearing, thinking and feedback; check the puzzled or blank look, or other signals that suggest messages have not been accurately perceived. It takes time.

Recognise the place of feeling and emotion in the communication process. Shared feelings enable people to move beyond the surface meeting to a more complete level of communication and meeting.

Create a "positive" climate. This can mean that negative feelings and suspicions need to be expressed. This will help to deal with undisclosed and hidden agendas that can subvert the meeting process

Listen carefully. Listening requires focussed attention, which means not interrupting either ourselves or others with comments that have no bearing on the topic.

Improve skills in verbal communication. Choose words that are commonly understood. Seek to keep messages simple clear and free of complex phrases that do not contribute e.g. "I really don't want to add anything but..."

Improve skill in non-verbal communication: Become alert to your own and others' body language, practice giving non verbal signals.

13. Ownership and Responsibility

There is a need for both ownership and initiative to be present in group members. Ownership is a sense that your own contribution is valued and that you share the collective vision of the group. Initiative is the willingness to carry out tasks, without needing to check every new stage with others. People with a high level of ownership and a low level of initiative will seek a lot of control but contribute very little to the life of the group or its task. Those with high initiative but low ownership can be like "loose cannons". They may work hard, but their actions can be unpredictable, and bear little relationship to the overall goals of the group. The bringing of these into balance requires a sequence that is especially important when new members join a group;

Share the vision, goals and purpose of the group

Interpret the vision/goals, so that they relate to practice as well as theory.

Help each other develop the skills needed to contribute effectively.

Continue to ensure group members offer mutual support.

The goals, dreams or vision of a group are changed when a new member joins, and it is helpful to remember that goal setting is a flexible and dynamic process. However whenever there is a crisis in the life of a group, and questions of initiative and ownership are raised, it can be helpful to ask questions based on this sequence in reverse order.

Is there support for members to practice responsible membership ?

Are the skills present for the current task and life of the group ?

Are the implications of the Goals of the group understood ?

Is there a shared vision or goal ?

14. Development and Age

On page 8 it was suggested that "a designated leader provides a cluster of leadership functions in a group as it begins its life but then allows and encourages members to assume leadership responsibilities to the full extent of their insight and skills."

"Insight and skills" are related to age. There is considerable debate about the "Developmental theorists". For our purposes it can be accepted that younger people generally have life tasks, patterns of behaviour, physical attributes and mental abilities that differ from older people. There is sufficient consistency to these patterns to provide valuable insight for people working with various age groups. Other papers and sources are designed to deal with age and development more fully.

Fowler, J.V. *Stages of Faith* Blackburn, Victoria: Collins Dove. 1987

Gilligan, C. *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press.

Groome, T. *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision*. Blackburn, Victoria: Collins Dove. 1980

15. Personality Styles in Group Interaction:

Choose a setting in which you are sometimes or often in conflict. You should not attempt to think of yourself in general, or in a variety of settings, but in one particular environment. A "setting" may be your relationship with your spouse as distinct from your relationship with your children; it might be your relationships at church or on a particular committee.

We have found people tend to get different scores as they think of themselves in each setting. So it will be most helpful to choose a setting that relates to the context on which you want to reflect - in this case your work with young people.

It is not a good idea to choose one particular conflict that might have happened in a setting. Rather, let yourself be reminded of several conflicts that might have occurred in that setting. Don't focus on the worst ones either, but think about the usual and regular situations you get into. Answer each question with a response that is as close as it can be to how you usually respond in this setting. Each question contains a pair of statements describing possible behaviour responses. For each pair, circle the A or the B statement which is most characteristic of your behaviour. If neither is typical of you, choose the response that you would be more likely to make.

1.
 - a. Using logic, I try to convince the other of the value of my position.
 - b. I use whatever authority I have to convince the other of my position.
2.
 - a. I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
 - b. I seek the other's help in working out a solution.
3.
 - a. I try to find a compromise solution.
 - b. I actively listen to the other.
4.
 - a. I make an effort to get my own way.
 - b. I will make an effort to go along with what the other wants.
5.
 - a. I don't let others abuse my rights.
 - b. I show empathy about their rights
6.
 - a. I try to bring all of their concerns to the surface.
 - b. If I give up something, I expect the other to give something up.
7.
 - a. I press my argument to get my points made.
 - b. I attempt to work on all concerns and issues in the open.
8.
 - a. I assert my rights
 - b. I will give up some points in exchange for others
9.
 - a. I might try to soothe the other's feelings to preserve our relationship
 - b. I encourage the other to act for themselves.
10.
 - a. I tell them my ideas
 - b. I propose a middle ground

11.
 - a. I remind the other I am an authority on the subject we are dealing with.
 - b. In order to keep the peace, I might sacrifice my own wishes for those of the other.
12.
 - a. I invite the other to join with me to deal with the differences between us.
 - b. I assume that giving advice creates dependence on me.
13.
 - a. I try to show them the logic of my position
 - b. I usually repeat back or paraphrase what the other has said.
14.
 - a. I use the constitution or the policy manual as a backup for my position
 - b. I encourage the other to stay with me in the conflict.
15.
 - a. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
 - b. If it makes the other happy, I might let them retain some of their views.
16.
 - a. I subtly threaten our relationship if I don't get my way.
 - b. I am firm in pursuing my argument.
17.
 - a. I am concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
 - b. I try to avoid unpleasantness for myself.
18.
 - a. I don't try to persuade another about what should be done. I help them find their own way.
 - b. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.
19.
 - a. I try to postpone the issue to a later time.
 - b. I try to show the logic and benefits of my position.
20.
 - a. I am non-judgemental about what the other says or does.
 - b. I call in an authority who will support me.
21.
 - a. I try to find an intermediate position.
 - b. I usually seek the other's help in working out a solution.
22.
 - a. I tell the other about the problem so we can work it out.
 - b. I propose solutions to our problems.
23.
 - a. I usually ask for more than I expect to get.
 - b. I offer rewards so the other will comply with my point of view.
24.
 - a. I try not to give advice, only to help the other find their own way.
 - b. Differences are not always worth worrying about.
25.
 - a. I calculate about how to get as much as I can, knowing I won't get everything.
 - b. I try to gain the other's trust in order to get them on my side.
26.
 - a. I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create unpleasantness.
 - b. I pout or withdraw when I don't get my way.

27.
 - a. I help the other take care of their own problems.
 - b. When someone avoids conflict with me, I invite them to work it out with me.
28.
 - a. I try to put as little of myself forward as possible, attempting to utilise the strengths of the other.
 - b. I point out the faults in the other's arguments.
29.
 - a. When someone threatens me, I assume we have a problem and invite them to work it out with me.
 - b. When I am right, I don't argue much, I just state my position and stand firm.
30.
 - a. I will give in a little so everybody gets something they want.
 - b. I try not to hurt the other's feelings.
31.
 - a. I carefully prepare my case before joining the argument.
 - b. I admonish the other to do as I say.
32.
 - a. I try to be considerate of the other's wishes.
 - b. If we are at a loss as to how to work an issue through, we ask for a third party.
33.
 - a. In order to succeed, one needs to be flexible.
 - b. In a conflict, one should focus on fact finding.
34.
 - a. I evaluate the positives and negatives of the other's arguments.
 - b. If the other's position is important to them, I try to meet those wishes.
35.
 - a. It is more important to be right than to be friendly.
 - b. I try to help the other feel courage and power to manage their own problems.
36.
 - a. I assume that in a conflict we will all be able to come out winners.
 - b. I assume conflict management is the art of attaining the possible.
37.
 - a. When opposed, I can usually come up with a counter argument.
 - b. I assume we can work a conflict through.
38.
 - a. I clearly prescribe my goals and expectations.
 - b. In a conflict, everybody should come out with something though not everything that was expected.
39.
 - a. I prefer to postpone unpleasant situations.
 - b. I support the other in trying to find their way.
40.
 - a. I defend my ideas energetically.
 - b. I only share that which is helpful to my case.
41.
 - a. I let others know whether my requirements are being met.
 - b. I try not to hurt the other's feelings.

- 42.
- a. I attempt to define our mutual problems jointly.
 - b. I sympathise with the other's difficulties, but don't take responsibility for them.
- 43.
- a. I put together a logical argument.
 - b. I express a lot of caring towards the other.
- 44.
- a. If it is important, I will put pressure on the other to get what is needed.
 - b. I join with the other to gather data about our problems.
- 45.
- a. I assume relationships are more important than issues.
 - b. I assume that each of us must give something up for the good of the whole.

SCORE SHEET

Circle the letters below, which you circled on each item of the questionnaire

	Persuade	Compel	Avoid/Accommodate	Collaborate	Negotiate	Support
1	A	B				
2			A	B		
3					A	B
4	A		B			
5		A				B
6				A	B	
7	A			B		
8		A			B	
9			A			B
10	A				B	
11		A	B			
12				A		B
13	A					B
14		A		B		
15			A		B	
16	B	A				
17			B	A		
18					B	A
19	B		A			
20		B				A
21				B	A	
22	B			A		
23		B			A	
24			B			A
25	B				A	
26		B	A			
27				B		A
28	B					A
29		B		A		
30			B		A	
31	A	B				
32			A	B		
33					A	B
34	A		B			
35		A				B
36				A	B	
37	A			B		
38		A			B	
39			A			B
40	A				B	
41		A	B			

42				A		B
43	A					B
44		A		B		
45			A		B	
T O T A L						

INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE

This questionnaire identifies six different styles for managing differences: Persuading, Compelling, Avoiding/Accommodating, Collaborating, Negotiating, and Supporting. Each can be an appropriate style, and none should be thought of as “bad” or inferior. A certain style can cause a problem when it is used inappropriately, but one should not assume that Avoiding is always wrong or that all conflicts must be confronted. Nor should one assume that Compelling is always inappropriate or that one should make an effort in every situation to collaborate or Persuade. In fact, those styles, which have recently been touted as always appropriate can be harmful in contexts that call for other strategies. (For example using collaborative techniques is inappropriate in a setting where people will take advantage of others who become inappropriately vulnerable. Collaboration is also inappropriate where both sides cannot or will not share information.)

It is possible for you to get a score from zero to fifteen on each scale in this questionnaire. The lower your score, the less likely you are to choose this particular strategy or style; the higher your score the more likely you are to use it.

The style on which you received the highest score will be the style with which you feel most comfortable in the setting you were thinking about when you filled out the form. The theory of the questionnaire is that you are likely to behave more in the modes of your high scores and less in the modes of your low scores.

To interpret your score, notice the number of differences between each score. If you have a difference of only one between your highest and your next highest, it will probably be fairly easy for you to choose the second highest strategy as a backup when your first choice seems not to be working. But if the difference is three or more, you will tend to hold onto the first choice, even when it is not working, because it is significantly preferred over the strategy with the lower score. Those strategies that have very low scores will be very difficult for you to use in that setting. Let’s look at some examples. Here is one woman’s score:

- Persuading – 10
- Compelling – 4
- Avoiding/Accommodating – 5
- Collaborating – 12
- Negotiating – 7
- Supporting – 7

This score shows a preference for collaboration and persuasion in dealing with conflict. The closeness of the two high scores (twelve and ten) means that it will be fairly easy for her to choose either style and perhaps use them in conjunction with each other. The difference between the persuasion score and the next highest, is three, which means that it will be

difficult for her to shift into negotiating or supporting if collaboration and persuasion don't work.

Let's look at another example:

Persuading –3
Compelling – 2
Avoiding/Accommodating – 2
Collaborating – 10
Negotiating – 14
Supporting –14

Here we have someone with scores tied for the highest mark. This means that he may have some internal conflict about which style to adopt, before he actually moves into the conflict management process. Even though there is a relatively high score of ten for collaborating, there is a difference of four between this and the two top scores. This man would probably delay significantly before using the collaborative style. Of course the very low scores on the other means that he is highly unlikely to use them.

One final example:

Persuading – 7
Compelling – 6
Avoiding/Accommodating – 7
Collaborating – 9
Negotiating – 8
Supporting – 8

These scores, as you can see, are very close together, with a total difference of three between the highest and the lowest. Thus, she will be able to use any of the styles with relative ease. The problem with this kind of score is that when a situation calls for a decided skill in one given area, she may not have sufficient skill to perform well. On the other hand, if a wide variety of resources are needed in a constantly changing environment, she will be highly successful.

DEFINITIONS

Persuading – attempting to change another's point of view, way of thinking, feelings or ideas. It is based on the assumption that the other is incorrect or ignorant, and needs to be changed in order to resolve the issue.

Compelling – the use of physical or emotional force, authority or pressure to oblige. This is mostly done through the use of authority

Avoiding/Accommodating – Staying away, pretending it isn't happening, removing yourself from the situation, or going along with the other. Can be expressed through procrastination, saying yes, then not doing what has been asked, or showing concern for the other without addressing the issue.

Collaborating – working together with the people with whom you disagree. This could also be called "joint problem solving." Acknowledgement, definition, and options for resolution of the problem, as well as choosing among the options, must be done by all concerned for a strategy to be truly collaborative.

Negotiating – similar to collaboration, but seeking only to get what they can out of it, rather than a truly mutually satisfactory resolution. It is making demands that you don't expect to be met, and intending to give in to some, but not all of the demands of the other. Some

information must be shared, but not necessarily all of it.

Supporting – help someone else solve a problem, for which you have no direct responsibility. It involves helping the other deal with their own problem, while encouraging them not to become dependent on you.



Observation Sheet.

Date:

Start Time:

Description of Group: Male Female Age range

Identified Leader(s): Number Male Female

General description of the group in your own words. Base this entirely on what you see and hear. Avoid assumptions and interpretations.

Place of meeting:

Description of the gathering area

The purpose of the gathering.

Group Tasks and Functions

Give evidence of which of the following are attended to, and by whom:

PERSONAL NEEDS:

Belonging

Contributing

Status

Power

Acceptance

Freedom

Recognition of particular problems

MAINTENANCE NEEDS:

Encouraging Understanding

Harmonising

Gate Keeping

Compromising

Norm setting

Feeling Expressing

TASK NEEDS:

Initiating

Seeking information

Giving Information

Clarifying

Consensus testing

Summarising

Assess the balance of energy put into the three aspects of group life set out above, and comment on its appropriateness.

Leadership Style:

Provide evidence of any of the following forms of leadership you observed:

Autocratic

Laissez Faire

Functional Leadership

Comment on the level of responsible membership.

Communication:

Comment on the quality of communication, indicating incidents that support your view.