## Group Stages – Reducing Group Uncertainty or Conflict and Promoting Group Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>The facilitator can reduce uncertainty in each stage by:</th>
<th>How can a facilitator do that?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forming</td>
<td>• Explaining the purpose of the group and its goals. &lt;br&gt; • Providing time for questions. &lt;br&gt; • Allowing time for members to become acquainted. &lt;br&gt; • Modeling expected behaviors.</td>
<td>• Warm-up exercise &lt;br&gt; • Establish ground rules &lt;br&gt; • Provide an agenda &lt;br&gt; • Conduct an icebreaker &lt;br&gt; • Clarify roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storming</td>
<td>• Hearing all points of view. &lt;br&gt; • Acknowledging conflict as an opportunity for improvement. &lt;br&gt; • Adhering to core values, such as truth, trust and respect. &lt;br&gt; • Maintaining democratic and humanistic ideals.</td>
<td>• Stay calm and neutral &lt;br&gt; • Invite input and feedback &lt;br&gt; • Admit conflict and intervene when necessary &lt;br&gt; • Encourage communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norming</td>
<td>• Modeling listening skills &lt;br&gt; • Fostering an atmosphere of trust. &lt;br&gt; • Teaching and facilitating consensus. &lt;br&gt; • Providing team-centered learning.</td>
<td>• Help solve problems &lt;br&gt; • Encourage feedback &lt;br&gt; • Provide necessary training &lt;br&gt; • Share power with group members &lt;br&gt; • Coach and counsel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing</td>
<td>• Being prepared for temporary setbacks. &lt;br&gt; • Focusing on the task accomplishments and interpersonal support. &lt;br&gt; • Providing feedback on the work of the group. &lt;br&gt; • Promoting and representing the group.</td>
<td>• Rotate duties &lt;br&gt; • Offer your expertise &lt;br&gt; • Help team celebrate success &lt;br&gt; • Build agendas together &lt;br&gt; • Act as a resource</td>
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<td>Transforming</td>
<td>• Having an icebreaker to get people to learn about each other.</td>
<td>• Warm-up exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Affirming that what is going on within the group is ok.</td>
<td>• Create common goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recapping where the group is and where they are going.</td>
<td>• Encourage participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summarizing current situations.</td>
<td>• Clarify roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Brainstorming to bring in new ideas.</td>
<td>• Provide support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Including newcomers or new ideas.</td>
<td></td>
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**FACILITATING THE GROUP**
## Task Roles

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<tr>
<th>Task Roles</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Why helps the group</th>
<th>Why hinders the group</th>
<th>Facilitator: How to control</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Initiator</strong></td>
<td>Starts things off; or helps change direction. Initially often the leader.</td>
<td>Takes responsibility; sets the ground work.</td>
<td>Stifles some people; could go in wrong direction.</td>
<td>Includes the group; monitors direction; gets group consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarifier</strong></td>
<td>Takes individual contributions and clarifies them. Encourages people to be specific.</td>
<td>Keeps on point and on track.</td>
<td>Annoying; gets caught up in the details.</td>
<td>Rephrases so not to put others off; ensures original intent is still there.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Information Giver</strong></td>
<td>Gives or volunteers certain information. Seeks clarification of suggestions based on facts relevant to the problem.</td>
<td>Informative; factual base. Keeps group on right track.</td>
<td>Annoying; may give wrong information. Not the SME. Can shut down the group.</td>
<td>Ensures information is accurate. Includes SME.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questioner</strong></td>
<td>Asks fundamental questions about the task. Has the ability to step back from the task and challenge assumptions.</td>
<td>Prevents Group Think; plays Devil’s Advocate; steps back and looks at whole; visionary.</td>
<td>May be too wide ranging; gets group off the topic. Slows things down.</td>
<td>Keeps on task. Monitors questions. Makes sure all participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summarizer</strong></td>
<td>Reevaluates the situation and summarizes the group’s thoughts and end product. Provides breathing space.</td>
<td>Provides clarity and check and balance.</td>
<td>Opinion of one; may miss something; Shuts down other creative thoughts.</td>
<td>Controls the summary; reminds group they may not be there yet. Encourages further discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opinion Giver</strong></td>
<td>States belief about alternative suggestions. Focuses on values rather than facts.</td>
<td>Can be productive and factual.</td>
<td>May not be factual; based on personal experience; Shuts down others.</td>
<td>Redirects to get others’ opinions.</td>
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## Maintenance Roles

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<td><strong>Encourager</strong></td>
<td>Praises good points, exhibits acceptance and group solidarity.</td>
<td>Brings group together, validates team work.</td>
<td>May feel good too soon; sometimes conflict is necessary.</td>
<td>Encourages group participation; validates and gets others’ opinions</td>
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<td><strong>Harmonizer</strong></td>
<td>Attempts to mediate differences among members or their points of view and seeks to reconcile differences. Reduces conflict and tension.</td>
<td>Provides positive atmosphere of team. Can reduce tension and calm tense situations.</td>
<td>Sometimes conflict is necessary for group to move forward.</td>
<td>Reminds group that it is ok to disagree; validates all opinions.</td>
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<td><strong>Supporter</strong></td>
<td>Provides warmth for individuals by agreeing with their ideas. Provides non-verbal support.</td>
<td>Validates others. Encourages participation</td>
<td>May validate the wrong idea, response, person, etc.</td>
<td>Validates person; Still needs to redirect the wrong information.</td>
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<td><strong>Gatekeeper</strong></td>
<td>Keeps communication open, suggests ways to share information with others.</td>
<td>Can keep the group on task and keeps them focused. Protects conversation monopoly.</td>
<td>Stops others from joining the discussion or stifling others.</td>
<td>Gives permission for more discussion. Takes back control. Re-asserts authority.</td>
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<td><strong>Compromiser</strong></td>
<td>Is willing to compromise or yield personal viewpoints, or admit an error.</td>
<td>Doesn’t fight; leads by example. Allows others to do the same.</td>
<td>Can cause others to feel that they must compromise as well.</td>
<td>Does a check and makes sure others are true to their own beliefs.</td>
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<td><strong>Observer</strong></td>
<td>Keeps records of the group processes. Brings data into the discussion as is seen pertinent.</td>
<td>Speaks out if something is worth noting. Sees big picture. Sees more than the spoken word.</td>
<td>Waiting to bring in own agenda.</td>
<td>Realizes that every person has his/her own agenda; is aware if person is being honest or not.</td>
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Effects of Group Size

Groups come in all shapes and sizes! Will the size of the group effect how you facilitate? Absolutely!

**Dyad** – Two members of the group or a group of simply two people.

**Advantages:**
*Sharing; trust building; greater opportunity to give input and exchange ideas; get to better know each other*

**Disadvantages:**
*Can get off track easily; limited perspective*

**Facilitation Techniques**
- Keep it intimate and personal.
- Allow more freedom with timeframes.
- Group can be more autonomous.

**Facilitation Challenges**
- Don’t become a part of the group.
- Be careful not to let the pair go off track.
- Personality challenges are more evident in dyads.

**Triad** – Three members of the group or a group of three.

**Advantages:**
*Sharing, trust building greater opportunity to give input; more opportunity to talk and to get to know each other*

**Disadvantages:**
*Can get off track easily; limited perspective; strong personality could dominate*

**Facilitation Techniques**
- Keep it intimate and personal.
- Appoint one of the group members as timekeeper.

**Facilitation Challenges**
- Be careful that one group member doesn’t become the “leader”.
- Personality challenges increase, as the size of the group increases.
- Quiet members of the group find it more difficult to “hide”.

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Small Group of 3-5

Advantages:
Sharing; trust building; greater opportunity to give input; more opportunity to talk and get to know each other

Disadvantages:
Loses some of the personal one-on-one; strong personality could dominate

Facilitation Techniques
• Establish group norms up front.
• Ensure all members of the group to understand the ‘end result’.
• Keep the group geographically close (seated together).

Facilitation Challenges
• Possibility of defined group roles and greater personality/behavior challenges.
• Group stages become more evident.

Medium Group of 6-15

Advantages:
Individual diversity; variety of opinions and roles

Disadvantages:
Smaller groups will form in the larger group; lose ability to bond/connect; easier for some not to participate

Facilitation Techniques
• “Work the crowd” and cover the entire spectrum of the workgroup.
• Allow the group to bond/build the team.
• Add humor and activities to keep group members positive.

Facilitation Challenges
• Personality/behavior challenges will be the most evident in this sized group.
• Easier for the frustrated or challenged member of the group to ‘give up’.
Large Group of 15 or more

**Advantages:**
Want to transfer information; clarify something by answering questions and getting instant feedback

**Disadvantages:**
Participants have less opportunity to speak; not all opinions can be heard; time is severely limited

**Facilitation Techniques**
- Visual aids are a must!
- The proper equipment (slides, lavaliere, microphone, etc.) is essential.
- Keep the group on track and on time!

**Facilitation Challenges**
- Keeping them interested will be a challenge.
- Involving the entire group is essential.
- Keeping challenging personalities in check is important.

*Can you think of additional techniques and/or challenges that we can add?*