

Where conflict may arise, during the five stages of Group Development.

Small Group Development Theory by Bruce Tuckman. Examples of conflicts that might be seen at each stage, with accompanying suggestions were developed by Delilah Poupore, Housing & Residential Services, UCSB.

Stages of Group Dynamics	Tasks of the Stage	Examples of Conflicts that Might Arise	Possible Approaches to Getting Through
1. Forming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining • Welcoming • Understanding the purpose • Building relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If purpose or membership seems exclusive, or people don't feel welcomed, they might not join or might be tentative or suspicious • If leaders set an exclusive tone, others may follow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual outreach • Listening openly to members
2. Norming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting Expectations • Establishing styles • Learning Leadership and Member Roles • Establishing processes • Establishing Goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If expectations not clear, people may not be meeting them • If expectations not met, frustrations may arise • If judgments arise about styles and roles, people may act critically • If oppressive behavior happens and/or is condoned, people may be hurt or want apologies or even want to quit • If the organization's goals don't match members' goals, members may be frustrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team-building on expectations or style inventories • Leaders stating expectations • Individual confrontations and listening • Group discussions
3. Storming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airing Dissatisfaction • Finding Ways through conflict • Assessing Leadership • Assessing Member role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If people attack the leader or organization, the leader may be defensive and may not lead well • If the leader doesn't deal with conflict in the manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A "support the leader" exercise • Individual discussions • Group discussion

		members want, members may feel distrust and may judge the leader	
4. Performing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning Well • Seeing Conflict as Opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are unresolved issues, they will keep resurfacing in another form until resolved • If member performance isn't supported, members may burn out or attack leadership • If leadership isn't supported, leaders may burn out, not appreciate members, not cultivate new leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions • Appreciations for members and leaders
5. Adjourning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Closure on Tasks • Putting Closure on Relationships • Preparing for next group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If people have unspoken feelings about closure, they may procrastinate or otherwise sabotage projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team-building about "closure" and the importance of acknowledging feelings while taking care of tasks

A few other factors should be considered, independent of the stages of development:

Stressed out people looking for a place to vent.

Sometimes the organization becomes a target for other frustrations people may be having in their school, work, or family life. So, when the person is part of the organization, they are in a way looking for similarities between the problems they are having in the rest of their life.

Listening and asking how you can support them can work. It's okay to set limits and refer them to other support, and remind people of expectations as well, because you don't want your organization to stall over one person's issues.

Oppression

Most organizations will not be completely free of the oppressions based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, physical and mental ability and age, because these oppressions exist within society. Therefore, organizations will need to work to create a non-oppressive atmosphere, as well as deal with language or behavior that perpetuates exclusion or hate.

Internalized Oppression

Because society has many oppressions, we all internalize information about groups—including the groups we are part of. Internalized oppression is when we take the misinformation we have about our own group, and turn it against ourselves. This is most often seen when leaders are attacked. There is a sub-conscious idea that "no one from this group [my group] could really be a capable leader."