Chapter 3

Group Development

1. Have you ever been in a group that seems stuck in endless loops of conflict, where nothing gets done, and all the energy was spent on interpersonal conflicts? Can you share an example? Share and compare your results with classmates.
2. Have you ever been in a group that gets things done, where everyone seems to know their role and responsibilities, where all members contribute and perform? Can you share an example? Share and compare your results with classmates.

The ratio of We's to I's is the best indicator of the development of a team.

 - Anonymous

Getting Started

A group is people doing something together. It can be a large group of thousand and we'll call them a crowd. It can be a small group of just three members. People might be social, or work together, formal or informal with each other, they might be assigned or self-selected as members—the range is great and varied, and as the group grows so does the complexity.

In this section we explore group development. Groups start out as a zero in our lives. They require no time, no thought, no energy, and no effort. Then we choose to be part of one, or receive an assignment. Now the group is no longer a zero in our lives. It might have a number, like 10%, meaning we spend about 10% of our work time on a project with a group. It could be 100%, as in we work everyday within the group. We could call it a 10 for the ten hours a week we invest in it. Regardless what we call a group in our lives, we have to call it something because it now exists for us, where once it did not.

We can also anticipate conflicts in a group. At work we may see people in terms, or between departments, conflict with each other. Even at home we may observe the friction that occurs between family members even after years of interaction. Where there are groups there will be conflict.

We find norms and expectations within groups. Ever group has a code of conduct, no matter how informal, of who does what when and how. Power, status, and even companionship all play a role in group expectations for its members.

Finally, all groups end. Families end, change, and transform. Work relationships change as well. Groups accept new members, lose former members, and they themselves become new groups, rising out of the ashes of the old.

All groups form, have conflicts, form norms, and dissolve. In this section we'll explore three related theories on group development, comparing their similarities and differences. We'll learn more about why we need groups, and why they need us. We will explore how it that we come to know each other, and how important groups are in our lives.

3.1 Group Life Cycles

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Identify the typical stages in the life cycle of a group.

Groups are dynamic systems, in constant change. Groups grow together and eventually come apart. People join groups and others leave. This dynamic changes and transforms the very nature of the group. **Group socialization**[1] involves how the group members interact with one another and form relationships. Just as you were once born, and changed your family, they changed you. You came to know a language and culture, a value system and set of beliefs that influences you to this day. You came to be **socialized**[2], to experience the process of learning to associate, communicate, or interact within a group. A group you belong to this year—perhaps a soccer team or the cast of a play—may not be part of your life next year. And those who are in leadership positions may ascend or descend the leadership hierarchy as the needs of the group, and other circumstances, change over time.

Group Life Cycle Patterns

Your life cycle is characterized with several steps, and while it doesn't follow a prescribed path, there are universal stages we can all recognize. You were born. You didn't choose your birth, your parents, your language or your culture, but you came to know them through communication. You came to know yourself, learned skills and discovered talents, and met other people. You worked, learned, lived, and loved, and as you aged, minor injuries took longer to heal. You competed in ever-increasing age groups in your favorite sport, and while your time for each performance may have increased as you aged, your experience allowed you to excel in other ways. Where you were once the novice, you have now learned something to share. You lived to see some of your friends pass before you, and the moment will arrive when you too must confront death.

In the same way, groups experience similar steps and stages and take on many of the characteristics we associate with life.Moreland, R., & Levine, J. (1982).

1. Involves how the group members interact with one another and form relationships.

2. The process of learning to associate, communicate, or interact within a group.

Socialization in small groups: temporal changes in individual group relations. (L. Berkowitz, Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psycology, 15*, 153. They grow, overcome illness and dysfunction, and transform across time. No group, just as no individual, lives forever.

Your first day on the job may be comparable to the first day you went to school. At home you may have learned some of the basics, like how to write with a pencil, but knowledge of that skill and its application are two different things. People spoke in different ways at school than at home, and you came to understand the importance of recess, of raising your hand to get the teacher's attention, and how to follow other school rules. At work, you may have trained for your profession, but the academic knowledge only serves as your foundation, much as your socialization at home served to guide you at school. On the job they use jargon terms, have schedules that may include coffee breaks (recess), have a supervisor (teacher), and have their own rules, explicit and understood. On the first day, it was all new, even if many of the elements were familiar.

In order to better understand group development and its life cycle, many researchers have described the universal stages and phases of groups. While there are modern interpretations of these stages, most draw from the model proposed by Tuckman.Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*, 384–399. This model, shown in <u>Table 3.1 "Tuckman's Linear Model of Group Development"</u>, specifies the usual order of the phases of group development, and allows us to predict several stages we can anticipate as we join a new group.

Tuckman begins with the **forming stage (also called orientation stage or orientation phase)**[3] as the initiation of group formation. This stage is also called the orientation stage because individual group members come to know each other. Group members who are new to each other and can't predict each other's behavior can be expected to experience the stress of uncertainty. **Uncertainty theory**[4] states that we choose to know more about others with whom we have interactions in order to reduce or resolve the anxiety associated with the unknown.Berger, C., & Calabrese, R. (1975). Some explorations in initial interactions and beyond: toward a fevelopmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human communication Research, 1*, 99–112.'Berger, C. (1986). Response uncertain outcome values in predicted relationships: uncertainty reduction theory then and now. *Human Communication Research, 13*, 34–38.'Gudykunst, W. (1995). Anxiety/uncertainty management theory. In R. W. Wiseman (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory* (pp. 8–58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. The more we know about others, and become accustomed to how they communicate, the better we can predict how they will interact with us in future contexts. If you learn that Monday mornings are never a good time for your supervisor, you quickly learn to schedule meetings later in the

3. Initiation of group formation, in which individual group members come to know each other.

4. States that we choose to know more about others with whom we have interactions in order to reduce or resolve the anxiety associated with the unknown.

week. Individuals are initially tentative and display caution as they begin to learn about the group and its members.

If you don't someone very well, it is easy to offend. Each group member brings to the group a set of experiences, combined with education and a self-concept. You won't be able to read this information on a name tag, you will only come to know it through time and interaction. Since the possibility of overlapping and competing viewpoints and perspectives exists, the group will experience a **storming stage**[5], a time of struggles as the members themselves sort out their differences. There may be more than one way to solve the problem or task at hand, and some group members may prefer one strategy over another. Some members of the group may be senior to the organization in comparison to you, and members may treat them differently. Some group members may be as new as you are and just as uncertain about everyone's talents, skills, roles, and self-perceptions. The wise communicator will anticipate the storming stage and help facilitate opportunities for the members to resolve uncertainty before the work commences. There may be challenges for leadership, and conflicting viewpoints. The sociology professor sees the world differently than the physics professor. The sales agent sees things differently than someone from accounting. A manager who understands and anticipates this normal challenge in the group's life cycle can help the group become more productive.

A clear definition of the purpose and mission of the group can help the members focus their energies. Interaction prior to the first meeting can help reduce uncertainty. Coffee and calories can help bring a group together. Providing the group with what they need, and opportunities to know each other, prior to their task can increase efficiency.

Groups that make a successful transition from the storming stage will next experience the **norming stage**[6], where the group establishes norms, or informal rules, for behavior and interaction. Who speaks first? Who takes notes? Who is creative and visual, and who is detail-oriented? Sometimes our job titles and functions speak for themselves, but human beings are complex. We are not simply a list of job functions, and in the dynamic marketplace of today's business environment you will often find that people have talents and skills well beyond their "official" role or task. Drawing on these strengths can make the group more effective.

The norming stage is marked by less division and more collaboration. The level of anxiety associated with interaction is generally reduced, making for a more positive work climate that promotes listening. When people feel less threatened, and their needs are met, they are more likely to focus their complete attention on the purpose of the group. If they are still concerned with who does what, and whether

5. Time of struggles as group members themselves sort out their differences.

6. Time when the group establishes norms, or informal rules, for behavior and interaction.

they will speak in error, the interaction framework will stay in the storming stage. Tensions are reduced when the normative expectations are known, and the degree to which a manager can describe these at the outset can reduce the amount of time the group remains in uncertainty. Group members generally express more satisfaction with clear expectations and are more inclined to participate.

Ultimately, the purpose of a work group is performance, and the preceding stages lead us to the **performing stage**[7], in which the group accomplishes its mandate, fulfills its purpose, and reaches its goals. To facilitate performance, group members can't skip the initiation of getting to know each other, or the sorting out of roles and norms, but they can try to focus on performance with clear expectations from the moment the group is formed. Productivity is often how we measure success in business and industry, and the group has to produce. Outcome assessments may have been built into the system from the beginning, and would serve as a benchmark for success. Wise managers know to celebrate success, as it brings more success, social cohesion, group participation, and a sense of job satisfaction. Incremental gains toward a benchmark may also be cause for celebration and support, and failure to reach a goal should be regarded as an opportunity for clarification.

It is generally wiser to focus on the performance of the group rather than individual contributions. Managers and group members will want to offer assistance to underperformers as well as congratulating members for their contributions. If the goal is to create a community where competition pushes each member to perform, individual highlights may serve your needs, but if you want a group to solve a problem or address a challenge as a group, you have to promote group cohesion. Members need to feel a sense of belonging, and praise (or the lack thereof) can be a sword with two edges. One stimulates and motivates, while the other demoralizes and divides.

Groups should be designed to produce and perform in ways and at levels that individuals cannot, or else you should consider compartmentalizing the tasks. The performing stage is where the productivity occurs, and it is necessary to make sure the group has what it needs to perform. Missing pieces, parts, or information can stall the group, and reset the cycle to storming all over again. Loss of performance is inefficiency, and that carries a cost. Managers will be measured by the group's productivity and performance, and their success reflects on the manager. Make sure the performing stage is one that is productive and healthy for its members.

7. Time when the group accomplishes its mandate, fulfills its purpose, and reaches its goals.

Imagine that you are the manager of a group that has produced an award-winning design for an ecologically innovative four-seat car. Their success is your success. Their celebrations are yours, even if you are not the focus of them. A manager

manages the process, while group members perform. If you were a member of the group, and you helped design the belt line, you made a fundamental contribution to the style of the car. Individual consumers may never consider the line from the front fender, across the doors, to the rear taillight as they make a purchase decision, but they will recognize beauty. You will know that you could not have achieved that fundamental part of car design without help from the engineers in the group, and if the number-crunching accountants had not seen the efficiency of the production process that produced it, it may never have survived the transition from prototype to production. The group came together and accomplished its goals with amazing results.

Now, as typically happens eventually with all groups, the time has come to move on to new assignments. In the **adjourning stage**[8], group members leave the group. Before you leave the group it may be time for a debriefing, a meeting to go over what worked, what didn't, and ways to improve for next time, or if you are in the US military, to participate in the "After Action Review" or AAR. While it is important to focus on group progress throughout the cycle, closure brings perspective. The completion of any training, mission, task, or journey provides an opportunity to review what occurred with a bit of distance. This stage can provide an important opportunity for managers and group members alike to learn from failure and success.

The group may cease to exist, or it may be transformed with new members and a new set of goals. Your contributions may have caught the attention of management, and you may be assigned to the redesign of the flagship vehicle, the halo car of your marque or brand. It's quite a professional honor, and it's yours because of your successful work in a group. Others will be reassigned to tasks that require their talents and skills, and you may or may not collaborate with them in the future.

You may miss the interactions with the members, even the more cantankerous ones, and will experience both relief and a sense of loss. Like life, the group process is normal, and mixed emotions are to be expected. A wise manager anticipates this stage and facilitates the separation with skill and ease. We often close this process with a ritual marking its passing, though the ritual may be as formal as an award or as informal as a "thank you" or a verbal acknowledgement of a job well done over coffee and calories.

On a more sober note, it is important not to forget that groups can reach the adjourning stage without having achieved success. Some businesses go bankrupt, some departments are closed, and some individuals lose their positions after a group fails to perform. Adjournment can come suddenly and unexpectedly, or

8. Time when group members leave the group.

gradually and piece by piece. Either way, a skilled business communicator will be prepared and recognize it as part of the classic group life cycle.

Table 3.1 Tuckman's Linear Model of Group DevelopmentTuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*, 384–399.

Stages	Activities
Forming	Members come together, learn about each other, and determine the purpose of the group.
Storming	Members engage in more direct communication and get to know each other. Conflicts between group members will often arise during this stage.
Norming	Members establish spoken or unspoken rules about how they communicate and work. Status, rank and roles in the group are established.
Performing	Members fulfill their purpose and reach their goal.
Adjourning	Members leave the group.

Let's now turn our attention to two other model's group lifecycles. While Tuckman's model is familiar, both Tubbs and Fisher offer two distinct, though similar views. Each model provides an area of emphasis, and all follow a similar progression.

In Tubb's Small Group Communication Theory (1995), the emphasis is on conflict vs. groupthink. As we've discussed, conflict is present in all groups, and we see the danger of groupthink raised in its absence. When the emphasis is on conformity, the group lacks diversity of viewpoints and the tendency to go along with the flow can produce disastrous results.

First Tubb's (Tubbs, 1995)Tubbs, Stewart. (1995). *A systems approach to small group interaction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995. asserts that we are involved in an orientation phase. We get to know each other, focus on limitations, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses, and begin to discuss the task at hand. This stage is followed by the **conflict stage**[9], characterized by different viewpoints, disagreements, competing agendas, and debate. This stage is natural and in this model is viewed as necessary to inhibit conformity or groupthink. The **consensus stage**[10] follows conflict, where group members select some ideas or actions over others and the group proceeds to get the task done. It is characterized by agreement and teamwork. Individual differences are not as apparent, having been sorted out during the previous conflict stage. All groups end, and once the task has been completed as a result of consensus and action, the group dissolves in the

9. Characterized by different viewpoints, disagreements, competing agendas, and debate.

10. Group members select some ideas or actions over others and the group proceeds to get the task done, characterized by agreement and teamwork.

closure stage[11]. This stage often features statements of agreement and support for the result, action, or outcome.

We can compare and contrast Tubb's model of group development to Fisher's (1970)Fisher, B. Aubrey. (1970). Decision emergence: Phases in group decision making. *Speech Monographs, 37*, 53–66. and view both overlap and divergence. Here the emphasis is on the group process of individuals becoming a functioning group that emerges successfully from conflict. The first stage is familiar: Orientation. It is characterized by awkward moments as individuals get to know each other, their backgrounds or special skill areas, and people size each other up. The group turns the corner to conflict where divergent points of view are presented, often characterized by struggles for power or a speech turn. As the group descends into conflict there can emerge allies and challengers, as members persuade each other and present alternatives. This process continues until one view point, course of action, or path becomes the generally-agreed upon course for the group, and they emerge together in the **emergence stage**[12]. Dissension and argument are no longer features of the conversation, and the emphasis is on action. The team acts, and then progresses to the **reinforcement stage**[13], characterized by affirmations and statements of agreement or support for the task or actions. Group members often look to each other for support at this stage, and it sharply contrasts with the preceding conflict stage, where opposing viewpoints were aired. The emphasis is on group members to reinforce each other and the decision or outcome.

Finally we can consider Poole's (1989)Poole, Marshall Scott, & Roth, Jonelle. (1989). Decision development in small groups V: Test of a contigency model. *Human Communication Research, 15,* 549–589. approach to group development, itself a distinct and divergent model that provides additional insight into group dynamics. In the case of Tuckman, Tubbs, and Fisher, we can observe a step-by-step process from start to finish. Poole asserts group development is far more complex, but offers three distinct, interdependent tracks or patterns of communication that overlap, start and stop, and go back and forth as the group wrestles with the challenges. Here the emphasis is on the transitions between the two main tracks: Topic and Relation. In the **topic track**[14], group members discuss the topic and all the relevant issues as they explore how to approach it, get a handle on it, or resolve it. In the **relation track**[15], group members also discuss themselves, self-disclosure information, and ask questions to learn more about each other. It relates to reducing uncertainty between group members, and sometimes the group shifts from the topic track to the relationship track as members sort out personal issues or work on relationships. In this moment where the group shifts between the two main tracks emerges a third track: breakpoints. The **breakpoint stage**[16] is characterized by turns in the conversation that regulate interaction, from an actual break in the discussion like a coffee break to a shift in the conversation to something they all have in common, like participation in a softball league.

11. Features statements of agreement and support for the result, action, or outcome.

12. Stage marked by agreement on one view point, course of action, or path becomes the generally-agreed upon course for the group, and they emerge together.

13. Characterized by affirmations and statements of agreement or support for the task or actions.

14. Group members discuss the topic and all the relevant issues as they explore how to approach it, get a handle on it, or resolve it.

15. Group members also discuss themselves, self-disclosure information, and ask questions to learn more about each other.

16. Characterized by turns in the conversation that regulate interaction, from an actual break in the discussion like a coffee break to a shift in the conversation to something they all have in common, like participation in a softball league.

Breakpoints can also include postponement, where decisions are delayed to allow for further research or consideration, regression in the conversation, where topics once considered and addressed are raised yet again, or even adjournment, where the group closes for a time, for the day, or disbands to address new tasks as members of new groups.

Finally, let's turn our attention to assessing whether the group is working together, pulling apart, and ways to improve group interactions. An effective group can be recognized in several ways including:

- Group members are active, interested, and involved.
- Group members are comfortable; no obvious tensions.
- Group members understand and accept the task, goal, or activity.
- Disagreement is resolved amicably.
- Active listening behaviors can be frequently observed.
- Group members interact freely; no one member is in control.
- Group members openly discuss their progress.
- Criticism is present, accepted, and discussed openly.

These signs allow us insight into the group dynamics, and we can observe how they contribute to task completion as well as group health. Conversely, there are also several ways we can recognize when a group is ineffective:

- Some group members are not active, interested, or involved.
- Group member interactions include obvious tensions.
- Group members do not understand or accept the task, goal, or activity; passive/aggressive behaviors may be present.
- Disagreement is not resolved.
- Active listening behaviors cannot be frequently observed.
- Group members do not interact freely; one member is in control.
- Group members do not discuss their progress.
- Criticism is not present; Groupthink is a significant risk.

With these telltale signs in mind, we can take an active part in promoting an active, effective, and healthy group:

- Encourage every member to contribute, speak, or share their thoughts.
- Encourage every member to understand their role, and everyone's roles, and how they complement each other.
- Encourage interdependence and interaction.

- Encourage the group to build on their common strengths and skills, celebrating incremental success.
- Encourage active listing and refrain from interruptions.
- Encourage group members to assess their collective progress frequently.

In this section we have examined group development and several theories on how groups come together, complete their task, goal, or activity, and grow apart. Just like interpersonal relationships include signs of health and prosperity, so do groups. The effective group leader understands both group process and ways to make a positive difference.

- Individual members demonstrate interest and involvement.
- There are no obvious tensions.
- It is clear the group understands and accepts the task.
- Listen behaviors are clearly demonstrated.
- Difference of opinion or viewpoint doesn't upset the group. Humor is a common characteristic, and tensions that may arise are quickly and amicably resolved.
- People feel free to express their viewpoints, thoughts, and feelings. Criticism is considered by group members and not considered as a personal attack.
- Consensus in decision-making is apparent.
- No one individual dominates the group.
- The group self-regulates, evaluating progress, regrouping, or advancing towards a common goal.
- Group member roles are clear and accepted.

An ineffective group can also be recognized in several ways:

- Some topics are not discussed, and understood as off-limits.
- There is a sense of urgency, preferring advancement and task completion before consideration or consensus.
- One or more group members dominate the discussion.
- Individual members demonstrate lack of interest and involvement.
- There are obvious tensions.
- It is clear the group does not understand or accepts the task. Group members are arguing in cycles, returning again and again to themes with no resolution.
- Listen behaviors are not clearly demonstrated.
- Difference of opinion or viewpoint upsets the group. Tensions rise with the expression of criticism.

- Criticism is not considered by group members and often interpreted as a personal attack.
- Consensus in decision-making is not apparent.
- The group does not self-regulate, and little discussion on group progress is present.
- Group member roles are not clear or accepted.

As we close our discussion on group development, let's consider five action steps members can encourage to help a group become more effective:

- Group members take turns speaking and listening, and do not interrupt.
- Group members acknowledge and combine their strengths.
- Group members separate the issues from personalities, message from messenger.
- Group members outline action steps and discuss progress periodically.
- Group members clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Groups come together and grow apart in predictable patterns.

EXERCISES

1. Is it possible for an outsider (a non-group member) to help a group move from the storming stage to the norming stage? Explain your answer and present it to the class.
2. Think of a group of which you are a member and identify some roles played by group members, including yourself. Have your roles, and those of others, changed over time? Are some roles more positive than others? Discuss your answers with your classmates.
3. In the course where you are using this book, think of yourself and your classmates as a group. At what stage of group formation are you currently? What stage will you be at when the school year ends?

3.2 The Life Cycle of Member Roles

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Describe different types of group members and group member roles.

Just as groups go through a life cycle when they form and eventually adjourn, so the members of groups fulfill different roles during this life cycle. These roles, proposed by Moreland and Levine,Moreland, R., & Levine, J. (1982). Socialization in small groups: temporal changes in individual group relations. (L. Berkowitz, Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 15*, 153. are summarized in <u>Table 3.2 "The Life Cycle of Member Roles"</u>.

Suppose you are about to graduate from school, and you are in the midst of an employment search. You've gathered extensive information on a couple of local businesses and are aware that they will be participating in the university job fair. You've explored their websites, talked to people currently employed at each company, and learned what you can from the public information available. At this stage, you are considered a **potential member**[17]. You may have an electrical, chemical, or mechanical engineering degree soon, but you are not a member of an engineering team.

You show up at the job fair in professional attire and completely prepared. The representatives of each company are respectful, cordial, and give you contact information. One of them even calls a member of the organization on the spot and arranges an interview for you next week. You are excited at the prospect, and want to learn more. You are still a potential member.

The interview goes well the following week. The day after the meeting you receive a call for a follow-up interview, which leads to a committee interview. A few weeks later, the company calls you with a job offer. However, in the meantime you have also been interviewing with other potential employers, and you are waiting to hear back from two of them. You are still a potential member.

17. Individual who is qualified to join a group but has not yet joined.

After careful consideration, you decide to take the job offer and start the next week. The projects look interesting, you'll be gaining valuable experience, and the commute to work is reasonable. Your first day on the job is positive, and they've assigned you a mentor. The conversations are positive, but at times you feel lost, as if they are speaking a language you can't quite grasp. As a **new group member**[18], your level of acceptance will increase as you begin learning the groups' rules, spoken and unspoken.Fisher, B. A. (1970). Decision emergence: phases in group decision making. *Speech Monographs, 37*, 56–66. You will gradually move from the potential member role to the role of new group member as you learn to fit into the group.

Over time and projects, you gradually increase your responsibilities. You are no longer looked at as the new person, and you can follow almost every conversation. You can't quite say "I remember when" because your tenure hasn't been that long, but you are a known quantity and know your way around. You are a full member of the group. **Full members**[19] enjoy knowing the rules and customs, and can even create new rules. New group members look to full members for leadership and guidance. Full group members can control the agenda and have considerable influence on the agenda and activities.

As a member of a new group, you will learn new customs and traditions.

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Full members of a group, however, can and do come into conflict. When you were a new member, you may have remained silent when you felt you had something to say, but now you state your case. There is more than one way to get the job done. You may suggest new ways that emphasize efficiency over existing methods. Co-workers who have been working in the department for several years may be unwilling to adapt and change, and tension may result. Expressing different views can cause conflict and may even interfere with communication.

When this type of tension arises, **divergent group members**[20] pull back, contribute less, and start to see themselves as separate from the group. Divergent group members have less eye contact, seek out each other's opinion less frequently, and listen defensively. In the beginning of the process, you felt a sense of belonging, but now you don't. **Marginal group members**[21] start to look outside the group for their interpersonal needs.

After several months of trying to cope with these adjustments, you decide that you never really investigated the other two companies; that your job search process was incomplete. Perhaps you should take a second look at the options. You will report to

18. Individual who is still learning the group's norms and rules.

19. Individual who is a known quantity, is familiar with the group's norms, and feels free to express opinions.

20. Individuals who pull back, contribute less, and start to see themselves as separate from the group.

21. Individual who looks outside the group for fulfillment of personal needs.

work on Monday, but will start the process of becoming an **ex-member**[22], one who no longer belongs. You may experience a sense of relief upon making this decision, given that you haven't felt like you belonged to the group for a while. When you line up your next job and submit your resignation, you make it official.

Table 3.2 The Life Cycle of Member RolesMoreland, R., & Levine, J. (1982). Socialization in small groups: temporal changes in individual group relations. (L. Berkowitz, Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 15*, 153.

1	Potential Member	Curiosity and Interest
2	New Member	Joined the group but still an outsider, and unknown
3	Full Member	Knows the "rules" and is looked to for leadership
4	Divergent Member	Focuses on differences
5	Marginal Member	No longer involved
6	Ex-Member	No longer considered a member

This process has no set timetable. Some people overcome differences and stay in the group for years. Others get promoted and leave the group only when they get transferred to regional headquarters. As a skilled communicator, you will recognize the signs of divergence, just like you anticipate the storming stage, and do your best to facilitate success.

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KEY TAKEAWAY

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- Group membership follows a predictable pattern of stages.

22. Individual who no longer belongs to a group.

EXERCISES

1. Consider a time when you were exploring group members, but had not yet decided to join. It would be accepting a job, or joining a church, for example. What points did you consider when deciding to become a member (or not). Share your results with your classmates.
2. You decided to be part of a group but quickly learned that there were members of the group, full members, who viewed you as the new person. How did you know they considered you a new person, and how did their language use reflect their full membership? Did they use terms that were unfamiliar? Did they discuss topics that made little sense to you? Share your results with classmates.
3. As a full member of a group you may have been asked to train a new employee, help a new person find their way around, or otherwise help them learn about the group, organization, or company. Did you think about your own orientation process and did your experience guide your actions? What did you do to help this person? What would you do different if the same situation presented itself again? Share your results with classmates.
4. As a full member of the group, you know the ins and outs. You know the strengths and weaknesses of the group members, their likes and dislikes, and at times, familiarity can breed contempt. Have you had conflicts arise because of this close familiarity and how was it resolved? Share and compare your results with classmates.
5. Think of a group you no longer belong to. At what point did you become an ex-member? Were you ever a marginal group member or a full member? Write a 2–3 paragraph description of the group, how and why you became a member, and how and why you left. Share your description with a classmate.

3.3 Why People Join Groups

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

<div style="text-align: center">**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**</div>

1. Understand the role of interpersonal needs in the communication process.

"What are you doing?" You may have had no problem answering the question, and simply pulled a couple of lines from yesterday's Twitter or reviewed your BlackBerry calendar. But if you had to compose an entirely original answer, would it prove to be a challenge? Perhaps at first this might appear to be a simple task. You have to work and your job required your participation in a meeting, or you care about someone and met him or her for lunch.

Both scenarios make sense on the surface, but we have to consider the *why* with more depth. Why that meeting, and why that partner? Why not another job, or a lunch date with someone else? If we consider the question long enough, we'll come around to the conclusion that we communicate with others in order to meet basic needs, and our meetings, interactions, and relationships help us meet those needs. We may also recognize that not all of our needs are met by any one person, job, experience, or context; instead, we diversify our communication interactions in order to meet our needs. At first you may be skeptical of the idea that we communicate to meet our basic needs, but let's consider a theory on the subject and see how well it predicts, describes, and anticipate our tendency to interact.

William SchutzSchutz, W. (1966). *The interpersonal underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books. offers an alternate version of interpersonal needs. Like Maslow, he considers the universal aspects of our needs, but he outlines how they operate within a range or continuum for each person. According to Schutz, the need for **affection**[23], or appreciation, is basic to all humans. We all need to be recognized and feel like we belong, but may have differing levels of expectations to meet that need. When part of the merger process is announced and the news of layoffs comes, those co-workers who have never been particularly outgoing and have largely kept to themselves may become even more withdrawn. Schutz

23. Related to the need for appreciation.

describes **underpersonals**[24] as people who seek limited interaction. On the opposite end of the spectrum, you may know people where you work that are often seeking attention and affirmation. Schutz describes **overpersonals**[25] as people who have a strong need to be liked and constantly seek attention from others. The person who strikes a healthy balance is called a **personal individual**[26].

Humans also have a need for **control**[27], or the ability to influence people and events. But that need may vary by the context, environment, and sense of security. You may have already researched similar mergers, as well as the forecasts for the new organization, and come to realize that your position and your department are central to the current business model. You may have also of taken steps to prioritize your budget, assess your transferable skills, and look for opportunities beyond your current context. Schutz would describe your efforts to control your situation as **autocratic**[28], or self-directed. At the same time there may be several employees who have not taken similar steps who look to you and others for leadership, in effect abdicating their responsibility. **Abdicrats**[29] shift the burn of responsibility from themselves to others, looking to others for a sense of control. **Democrats**[30] share the need between the individual and the group, and may try to hold a departmental meeting to gather information and share.

Finally, Schutz echoes Maslow in his assertion that belonging is a basic interpersonal need, but notes that it exists within a range or continuum, where some need more and others less. **Undersocials**[31] may be less likely to seek interaction, may prefer smaller groups, and will generally not be found on center stage. **Oversocials**[32], however, crave the spotlight of attention and are highly motivated to seek belonging. A **social person**[33] is one who strikes a healthy balance between being withdrawn and being the constant center of attention.

Schutz describes these three interpersonal needs of affection, control, and belonging as interdependent and variable. In one context an individual may have a high need for control, while in others he or she may not perceive the same level of motivation or compulsion to meet that need. Both Maslow and Schutz offer us two related versions of interpersonal needs that begin to address the central question: why communicate?

We communicate with each other to meet our needs, regardless how we define those needs. From the time you are a newborn infant crying for food or the time you are a toddler learning to say "please" when requesting a cup of milk, to the time you are a adult learning the rituals of the job interview and the conference room, you learn to communicate in order to gain a sense of self within the group or community, meeting your basic needs as you grow and learn.

24. People who seek limited interaction.

25. People who have a strong need to be liked and constantly seek attention from others.

26. The person who strikes a healthy balance in terms of human interaction.

27. The ability to influence people and events.

28. Self-directed in terms of control.

29. People who shift the burn of responsibility from themselves to others.

30. People who share the need for control between the individual and the group.

31. People who are less likely to seek interaction, may prefer smaller groups, and will generally not be found on center stage.

32. People who crave the spotlight of attention and are highly motivated to seek belonging.

33. Person who strikes a healthy balance between being withdrawn and being the constant center of attention.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Through communication, we meet universal human needs.

EXERCISES

1. Review the types of individuals from Schutz's theory described in this section. Which types do you think fit you? Which types fit some of your co-workers or classmates? Why? Share your opinions with your classmates and compare your self-assessment with the types they believe describe you.
2. Think of two or more different situations and how you might express your personal needs differently from one situation to the other. Have you observed similar variations in personal needs in other people from one situation to another? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.

3.4 Social Penetration Theory

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

How do you get to know other people? If the answer springs immediately to mind, we're getting somewhere: communication. Communication allows us to share experiences, come to know ourselves and others, and form relationships, but it requires time and effort. You don't get to know someone in a day, a month, or even a year. At the same time you are coming to know them, they are changing, adapting, and growing—and so are you. When groups come together people get to know each other and start the trust-building process. When we do not take the time to get to know each other, and focus simply on the task at hand, the group often suffers.

Altman and TaylorAltman, I., & Taylor, D. (1973). *Social penetration: the development of interpersonal relationships.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. describe this progression from superficial to intimate levels of communication in social penetration theory, which is often called the Onion Theory because the model looks like an onion and involves layers that are peeled away. According to social penetration theory, we fear that which we do not know. That includes people. Strangers go from being unknown to known through a series of steps that we can observe through conversational interactions. People come together in groups and teams and do amazing things.

If we didn't have the weather to talk about, what would we say? People across cultures use a variety of signals to indicate neutral or submissive stances in relation to each other. A wave, a nod, or a spoken reference about a beautiful day can indicate an open, approachable stance rather than a guarded, defensive posture. At the outermost layer of the onion, in this model, there is only that which we can observe. We can observe characteristics about each other and make judgments, but

they are educated guesses at best. Our nonverbal displays of affiliation, like a team jacket, a uniform, or a badge, may communicate something about us, but we only peel away a layer when we engage in conversation, oral or written.

As we move from public to private information we make the transition from small talk to substantial, and eventually intimate, conversations. Communication requires trust and that often takes time. Beginnings are fragile times and when expectations, roles, and ways of communicating are not clear, misunderstandings can occur. Some relationships may never proceed past observations on the weather, while others may explore controversial topics like politics or religion. A married couple that has spent countless years together may be able to finish each other's sentences, and as memory fades, the retelling of stories may serve to bond and reinforce the relationship. Increasingly intimate knowledge and levels of trust are achieved over time, involving frequency of interaction and well as length and quality. Positive interactions may lead to more positive interactions, while negative ones may lead to less overall interaction.

This may appear to be common sense at first, but let's examine an example. You are new to a position and your supervisor has been in his or her role for a number of years. Some people at your same level within the organization enjoy a level of knowledge and ease of interaction with your supervisor that you lack. They may have had more time and interactions with the supervisor, but you can still use this theory to gain trust and build a healthy relationship. Recognize that you are unknown to your supervisor, and they to you. Start with superficial conversations that are neutral and non-threatening, but that demonstrate a willingness to engage in communication. Silence early in a relationship can be a sign of respect, but it can also send the message that you are fearful, shy, or lack confidence. It can be interpreted as an unwillingness to communicate, and may actually discourage interaction. If the supervisor picks up the conversation, keep your responses short and light. If not, keep an upbeat attitude and mention the weather.

Over time the conversations may gradually grow to cross topics beyond the scope of the office, and a relationship may form that involves trust. To a degree, you and your co-workers learn to predict one another's responses and relax in the knowledge of mutual respect. If, however, you skip from superficial to intimate topics too quickly, you run risk of violating normative expectations. Trust takes time, and with can come empathy and understanding, but if you share with your supervisor your personal struggles on day one, it may erode your credibility. According to the social penetration theory, people go from superficial to intimate conversations as trust develops through repeated, positive interactions. **Self-disclosure**[34] is "information, thoughts, or feelings we tell others about ourselves that they would not otherwise know."McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. pp. 112 Taking it step by step, and not

34. Information, thoughts, or feelings we tell others about ourselves that they would not otherwise know.

rushing to self-disclose or asking personal questions too soon, can help develop positive business relationships.

Principles of Self-Disclosure

Write down five terms that describe your personal self, and five terms that describe your professional self. Once you have completed your two lists, compare the results. They may have points that overlap, or may have words that describe you in your distinct roles that are quite different. This difference can be easy to address, but at times it can be a challenge to maintain. How much of "you" do you share in the workplace? Our personal and professional lives don't exist independently, and in many ways are interdependent.

How do people know more about us? We communicate information about ourselves, whether or not we are aware of it. You cannot *not* communicate.Watzlawick, P. (1993). *The language of change: elements of therapeutic communication.* New York, NY: Norton & Company. From your internal monologue and intrapersonal to communication, to verbal and nonverbal communication, communication is constantly occurring. What do you communicate about yourself by the clothes (or brands) you wear, the tattoos you display, or the piercing you remove before you enter the workplace? Self-disclosure is a process by which you intentionally communicate information to others, but can involve unintentional, but revealing slips. Beebe, Beebe, and RedmondBeebe, S., Beebe, S., & Redmond, M. (2002). *Interpersonal communication relating to others* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. offer us five principles of self-disclosure that remind us that communication is an integral part of any business or organizational setting. Let's discuss them one by one.

Self-Disclosure Usually Moves in Small Steps

Would you come to work on your first day wearing a large purple hat? If you knew that office attire was primarily brown and gray suits? Most people would say, "of course not!" as there is a normative expectation for dress, sometimes called a dress code. After you have worked within the organization, earned trust and established credibility, and earned your place in the community, the purple hat might be positively received with a sense of humor. But if you haven't yet earned your place, your fashion statement may be poorly received. In the same way, personal information is normally reserved for those of confidence, and earned over time. Take small steps as you come to know your colleagues, taking care to make sure who you are does not speak louder than what you say.

Self-Disclosure Moves from Impersonal to Intimate Information

So you decided against wearing the purple hat to work on your first day, but after a successful first week you went out with friends from your college days. You shut down the bar late in the evening and paid for it on Sunday. At work on Monday, is it a wise strategy to share the finer tips of the drinking games you played on Saturday night? Again, most people would say, "of course not!" It has nothing to do with work, and only makes you look immature. Some people have serious substance abuse issues, and your stories could sound insensitive, producing a negative impact. How would you know, as you don't really know your co-workers yet? In the same way, it is not a wise strategy to post photos from the weekend's escapades on your MySpace, Facebook, or similar social networking web page. Employers are increasingly aware of their employees' web pages, and the picture of you looking stupid may come to mind when your supervisor is considering you for a promotion. You represent yourself, but you also represent your company and its reputation. If you don't represent it well, you run the risk of not representing it at all.

Self-Disclosure Is Reciprocal

Monday morning brings the opportunity to tell all sorts of stories about the weekend, and since you've wisely decided to leave any references to the bar in the past, you may instead choose the wise conversational strategy of asking questions. You may ask your co-workers what they did, what it was like, who they met, and where they went, but eventually all conversations form a circle that comes back to you. The dance between source and receiver isn't linear, it's transactional. After a couple of stories, sooner or later, you'll hear the question "What did you do this weekend?" It's now your turn. This aspect of conversation is universal. We expect when we reveal something about ourselves that others will reciprocate. The **dyadic effect**[35] is the formal term for this process, and is often thought to meet the need to reduce uncertainty about conversational partners. If you stay quiet or decline to answer after everyone else has taken a turn, what will happen? They may be put off at first, they may invent stories and let their imaginations run wild, or they may reject you. It may be subtle at first, but reciprocity is expected.

You have the choice of what to reveal, and when. You may choose to describe your weekend by describing the friends and conversations while omitting any reference to the bar. You may choose to focus on your Sunday afternoon gardening activities. You may just say you read a good book and mention the title of the one you are reading. Regardless of what option you choose, you have the freedom and responsibility within the dyadic effect to reciprocate, but you have a degree of control. You can learn to anticipate when your turn will come, and to give some thought to what you will say before the moment arrives.

35. The expectation that when we reveal something about ourselves, others will reciprocate.

Self-Disclosure Involves Risk

If you decided to go with the "good book" option, or perhaps mention that you watched a movie, you just ran the risk that whatever you are reading or watching may be criticized. If the book you are enjoying is controversial, you might anticipate a bit of a debate, but if you mentioned a romance novel, or one that has a science fiction theme, you may have thought it wouldn't generate criticism. Sometimes the most innocent reference or comment can produce conflict when the conversational partners have little prior history. At the same time, nothing ventured, nothing gained. How are you going to discover that the person you work with appreciates the same author or genre if you don't share that information? Self-disclosure involves risk, but can produce positive results.

Self-Disclosure Involves Trust

Before you mention the title of the book or movie you saw this weekend, you may consider your audience and what you know about them. If you've only known them for a week, your awareness of their habits, quirks, likes and dislikes may be limited. At the same time, if you feel safe and relatively secure, you may test the waters with a reference to the genre but not the author. You may also decide that it is just a book, and they can take it or leave it.

"Trust is the ability to place confidence in or rely on the character or truth of someone."McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. pp 114 Trust is a process, not a badge to be earned. It takes time to develop, and can be lost in a moment. Even if you don't agree with you co-worker, understand that self-revelation communicates a measure of trust and confidence. Respect that confidence, and respect yourself.

Also consider the nature of the information. Some information communicated in confidence must see the light of day. Sexual harassment, fraud, theft, and abuse are all issues in the workplace, and if you become aware of these behaviors you will have a responsibility to report them according to your organization's procedures. A professional understands that trust is built over time, and understands how valuable this intangible commodity can be to success.

Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal communication[36] can be defined as communication between two people, but the definition fails to capture the essence of a relationship. This broad definition is useful when we compare it to intrapersonal communication, or communication with ourselves, as opposed to mass communication, or

36. Communication between two people.

communication with a large audience, but it requires clarification. The developmental view of interpersonal communication places emphasis on the relationship rather than the size of the audience, and draws a distinction between impersonal and personal interactions.

For example, one day your co-worker and best friend, Iris, whom you've come to know on a personal as well as a professional level, gets promoted to the position of manager. She didn't tell you ahead of time because it wasn't certain, and she didn't know how to bring up the possible change of roles. Your relationship with Iris will change as your roles transform. Her perspective will change, and so will yours. You may stay friends, or she may not have as much time for after hours activities as she once did. Over time you and Iris gradually grow apart, spending less time together. You eventually lose touch. What is the status of your relationship?

If you have ever had even a minor interpersonal transaction such as buying a cup of coffee from a clerk, you know that some people can be personable, but does that mean you've developed a relationship within the transaction process? For many people the transaction is an impersonal experience, however pleasant. What is the difference between the brief interaction of a transaction and the interactions you periodically have with your colleague Iris who is now your manager?

The developmental view places an emphasis on the prior history, but also focuses on the level of familiarity and trust. Over time and with increased frequency we form bonds or relationships with people, and if that time and frequency are diminished, we lose that familiarity. The relationship with the clerk may be impersonal, but so can the relationship with the manager after time has passed and the familiarity is lost. From a developmental view, interpersonal communication can exist across this range of experience and interaction.

Review the lists you made for Introductory Exercise #3 at the beginning of this chapter. If you evaluate your list of what is important to you, will you find objects or relationships? You may value your home or vehicle, but for most people relationships with friends and family are at the top of the list. Interpersonal relationships take time and effort to form, and they can be challenging. All relationships are dynamic, meaning that they transform and adapt to changes within the context and environment. They require effort and sacrifice, and at times give rise to the question: why bother? A short answer may be that we as humans are compelled to form bonds, but it still fails to answer the question, why?

Uncertainty theory states that we choose to know more about others with whom we have interactions in order to reduce or resolve the anxiety associated with the unknown.Berger, C., & Calabrese, R. (1975). Some explorations in initial interactions

and beyond: toward a fevelopmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human communication Research, 1*, 99–112.'Berger, C. (1986). Response uncertain outcome values in predicted relationships: uncertainty reduction theory then and now. *Human Communication Research, 13*, 34–38.'Gudykunst, W.(1995) Anxiety/ uncertainty management theory. In R. W. Wiseman (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory* (pp. 8–58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. The more we know about others, and become accustomed to how they communicate, the better we can predict how they will interact with us in future contexts. If you learn that Monday mornings are never a good time for your supervisor, you quickly learn to schedule meetings later in the week. The **predicted outcome value theory**[37] asserts that not only do we want to reduce uncertainty, we also want to maximize our possible benefit from the association.Sunnafrank, M. (1986). Predicted outcome value during initial interactions: a reformulation of uncertainty reduction theory. *Human Communication Research*, 3–33.'Sunnafrank, M. (1990). Predicted outcome value and uncertainty reduction theory: a test of compting perspective. *Human Communication Theory, 17*, 76–150.'Kellerman, K., & Reynolds, R. (1990). when ignorance is bliss: the role of motivation to reduce uncertainty in uncertainty reduction theory. *Human communication Research, 17*, 5–75. This theory would predict that you would choose Tuesday or later for a meeting in order to maximize the potential for positive interaction and any possible rewards that may result. One theory involves the avoidance of fear while the other focuses on the pursuit of reward, and together they provide a point of reference as we continue our discussion on interpersonal relationships.

Regardless of whether we focus on collaboration or competition, we can see that interpersonal communication is necessary in the business environment. We want to know our place and role within the organization, accurately predict those within our proximity, and create a sense of safety and belonging. Family for many is the first experience in interpersonal relationships, but as we develop professionally, our relationships at work may take on many of the attributes we associate with family communication. We look to each other with similar sibling rivalries, competition for attention and resources, and support. The workplace and our peers can become as close, or closer, than our birth families, with similar challenges and rewards.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

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- Interpersonal relationships are an important part of the work environment.
- We come to know one another gradually.
- Self-disclosure involves risk and reward, and is a normal part of communication.

37. Asserts that not only do we want to reduce uncertainty, we also want to maximize our possible benefit from the association.

EXERCISES

1. Write down five terms that describe your personal self, and five terms that describe your professional self. Compare your results with a classmate.

2. Think of someone you trust and who trusts you. How did you come to have a mutually trusting relationship? Did it take effort on both people's part? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.

3. How important do you think self-disclosure is in business settings? Give some examples. Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.

3.5 Group Norms

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

A new vice president came into an organization. At the end of her first weekly meeting with her staff members, she tossed a nerf ball to one of them and asked the person to say how she was feeling. When that person finished, the vice president asked her to toss the ball to someone else, and so on, until everyone had expressed himself or herself. This process soon became a regular feature of the group's meetings.

In our earlier section on group life cycles, you learned about Bruce Tuckman's model of forming, storming, norming, and performing. Along with roles, status, and trust, which we'll encounter in the next chapter, norms are usually generated and adopted after a group's "forming" and "storming" stages.

As a group moves from "forming" toward "performing," then, norms help guide its members along the way. Whether we see them or not, norms are powerful predictors of a group's behavior.

What Norms Are

Group norms[38] are rules or guidelines that reflect expectations of how group members should act and interact. They define what behaviors are acceptable or not; good or not; right or not; or appropriate or not (O'Hair & Wieman, p. 19).O'Hair, D. & Wiemann, M.O. (2004). *The essential guide to group communication.* Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's.

38. Rules or guidelines that reflect expectations of how group members should act and interact.

Norms may relate to how people look, behave, or communicate with each other. Tossing a nerf ball around a circle of workers is perhaps a peculiar way to start a meeting, and it probably doesn't contribute directly to achieving substantive goals, but it did represent a norm in the vice president's group we described—which, by the way, was a real group and not a product of imagination!

Some norms relate to how a group as a whole will act—e.g., when and how often it will meet, for instance. Others have to do with the behavior of individual group members and the roles those members play within the group.

By defining what social behavior lies within acceptable boundaries, norms can help a group function smoothly and face conflict without falling apart (Hayes, p. 31).Hayes, N. (2004). *Managing teams: A strategy for success.* London: Thomson. Thus, they can constitute a potent force to promote positive interaction among group members.

Origin of Norms

In a new group, norms may arise organically as members settle into their relationships and start to function together. Decisions need to be made and time needs to be taken for diverse activities such as identifying goals, determining tasks, and allocating human and tangible resources. Who will take the lead on these areas of the group's behavior has to be determined.

Further questions need to be answered as the group gets off the ground. Here are some examples:

- What topics are and are not appropriate for the group to discuss?
- How and to what degree will members respect and attend to each other's statements and viewpoints?
- How and when, if ever, will the group behave casually?
- What mechanisms will the group use to solve problems?

Any group eventually needs to deal with these questions, and the answers it reaches will become embodied as norms.

Implicit Norms

Whether a group is new or not, its norms aren't always expressed or discussed. People may simply assume that certain norms exist and accept them "by unspoken consent" (Galanes & Adams, p. 162),Galanes, G., & Adams, K. (2013). *Effective group*

discussion: *Theory and practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill. in which case they are **implicit norms**[39].

Consider "same seat syndrome," for example. How often have you found that people in a college classroom seem to gravitate every day to exactly the same chairs they've always sat in? Nobody says, "Hey, I've decided that this will be my chair forever" or "I see that that's your territory, so I'll never sit there," do they?

Often norms are difficult for group members to express in words. What topics are okay or not okay to talk about during informal "chit-chat" may be a matter of unstated intuition rather than something that people can readily describe. Nevertheless, implicit norms may be extremely powerful, and even large groups are apt to have at least some implicit norms.

The cultural background each member brings to a group may lie beneath conscious awareness, yet it may exert a powerful influence on both that person's and the group's behavior and expectations. Just as a fish is unaware that it lives in water, a person may easily go through life and participate in group interactions without perceiving that he or she is the product of a culture.

Explicit Norms

Sometimes group norms are stated outright, either orally or in writing; then they are **explicit norms**[40]. Such explicit rules may be imposed by an authority figure such as an executive or designated team leader. They may be part of formal policies or regulations. Wearing a uniform or answering the telephone in a certain way, for instance, may be written requirements in a workplace group.

Manuals, and even books, have been composed to provide members of groups with norms of how to behave. A manager in one organization we know wrote a policy in response to almost every problem or difficulty his division experienced. Because the manager served for more than 15 years in his position, the collection of these incident-based policies eventually filled a large tabbed binder. The bigger the group, the more likely it is that its norms will be rigid and explicit like these (Lamberton, L., & Minor-Evans, L., 2002).Lamberton, L., & Minor-Evans, L. (2002). *Human relations: Strategies for success* (2nd ed.). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill.

39. Norms which are not discussed or expressed in writing or orally.

40. Norms expressed overtly in written or oral form.

Table 3.3 Implicit, Explicit, Individual, and Whole-Group Norms.

	Individual	**Whole-Group**
Explicit	Each new member receives a copy of the group's bylaws	The group keeps minutes of all its meetings
Implicit	A person should raise his/her hand to signal a desire to speak	Someone brings doughnuts or other treats every time the group meets

Interaction, Procedure, Status, and Achievement Norms

Norms may relate to four aspects of a group's identity: interaction, procedure, status, and achievement (Engleberg & Wynn, p. 37).Engleberg, I.N., & Wynn, D. R. (2013). *Working in groups* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson. Let's look at each of these kinds of norms.

Interaction norms[41] specify how people communicate in the group. Is it expected that everyone in the group should have an opportunity to speak about any topic that the group deals with? How long is it okay for one person to speak?

Procedure-oriented norms[42] identify how the group functions. Does it hold meetings according to an established schedule? Who speaks first when the group gets together? Does someone distribute a written record of what happened after every time the group gets together?

Status norms[43] indicate the degree of influence that members possess and how that influence is obtained and expressed. Who decides when a group discussion has concluded? When and how are officers for the group elected?

Achievement norms[44] relate to standards the group sets for the nature and amount of its work. Must members cite readings or the comments of authorities when they make presentations to the group? What happens to a group member who completes tasks late or fails to complete them at all?

As we'll discover in the next chapter, enforcing and changing the norms of a group throughout its life cycle may present substantial challenges. Those challenges can best be overcome if members share a common understanding of their group's norms.

41. Norms which specify how people communicate in a group.

42. Norms which identify how a group functions.

43. Norms which indicate the degree of influence that members possess.

44. Norms which the group sets for the nature and amount of its work.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Group norms, whether explicit or implicit, underlie and affect almost all aspects of a group's activities.

EXERCISES

1. Think of an unusual norm you've encountered in a group you were part of. Do you know how and from whom it originated? If not, what is your speculation about its origin?
2. Identify an implicit norm in a group you were part of. Would it have been a good idea to make the norm explicit instead? Why or why not?
3. Describe a group norm you've experienced that dealt with either interaction, procedure, status, or achievement.

3.6 Summary

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

In this chapter we have discussed group development and several theories. We have discussed group stages of development and their hallmark features. Working in a group can be challenging, but with insight and understanding into the group development process, the effective group communicator can make a positive difference.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Discuss storming as a stage, how to recognize it and the role it plays in group development.
2. Discuss adjournment as a stage, how to recognize it, and the role it plays in group development.
3. Select the least important group development stage and discuss why you selected it.
4. Select the most important group development stage and discussion why you selected it.
5. Conflict is present in all groups. Discuss one positive role of conflict in a group and provide an example.

Additional Resources

Read about groups and teams on the business website 1000 Ventures. http://www.1000ventures.com/business_guide/crosscuttings/team_main.html

Learn more about Tuckman's Linear Model. http://www.infed.org/thinkers/tuckman.htm

Learn more about Dewey's sequence of group problem solving on this site from Manatee Community College in Florida. http://faculty.mccfl.edu/frithl/SPC1600/handouts/Dewey.htm

Read a hands-on article about how to conduct productive meetings.
http://www.articlesnatch.com/Article/How-To-Conduct-Productive-Meetings-/132050

Visit this WikiHow site to learn how to use VOIP. http://www.wikihow.com/Use-VoIP

Watch a YouTube video on cloud computing. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PNuQHUiV3Q

Read about groups and teams, and contribute to a wiki about them, on Wikibooks.
http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Managing_Groups_and_Teams

How did Twitter get started? Find out. http://twitter.com/about

Take a (nonscientific) quiz to identify your leadership style.
http://psychology.about.com/library/quiz/bl-leadershipquiz.htm

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.