<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/search/node/%22group%20work%22>

## Section 1: Making group contracts

Found at:

## <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/making-group-contracts>

Norms are very important elements of group dynamics because they not only provide guidelines that indicate how members should behave, but they also help to keep the group unified by providing common beliefs, opinions and behaviour. Writing down and agreeing upon norms in the form of a contract provides a way to clarify and enforce these norms when necessary.

A contract should contain:

1. Those group behaviours which will be expected of all group members. Choose only those behaviours which are crucial to the group's effectiveness.
2. Procedures for resolving impasses in the group. There should be an exact mechanism: will the leader decide? will it go to a vote? how will ties be decided? will the dispute be arbitrated by a designated person? and so on.

## Sample contract: Group behaviours expected of each member…

#### Temporal examples

1. All group members will be punctual. Meetings will start five minutes after the agreed start time and everyone should be there and ready by then.
2. We should turn up to all meetings unless it has been agreed beforehand or unless there are unavoidable events such as illness.
3. All group members will remain in the meeting until (a) all tasks for that meeting are completed, or (b) there is unanimous adjournment.
4. Breaks will be decided by unanimous consent, and breaks will not exceed twenty minutes in length

#### Procedural examples

1. All group members will come to the meetings prepared by  
   (a) reading the assigned material (as much as possible), and  
   (b) coming with ideas pertaining to the tasks and decisions to be made.
2. Tasks that group members agree to undertake should be completed to the agreed deadline. If it looks as though there will be a problem meeting a deadline, the person concerned should seek help from other members of the team in time to avoid a delay.
3. There will be an assimilation period at the end of the session to evaluate group mechanics and ensure that all tasks have been completed adequately.
4. Each group member has the right to point out whether any of these rules are being broken.

#### Behavioural examples

1. The group will actively seek a consensus of opinion based on the opinions of every member.
2. Each member will take turns listening as well as talking, and active listening will be a strategy for all group discussions.
3. Sexist and racist remarks are not acceptable.
4. Aggressive and dominating behaviour is not acceptable.

#### Role examples

1. Roles will be assigned prior to a meeting or, if this is not possible, at the beginning of a meeting.
2. The leader will, at the beginning of a meeting, set sub-goals. These sub-goals will be presented to the group for a consensus of approval. The leader is also responsible for the presentation of the group material to the rest of the class.
3. The secretary is responsible for taking in-session notes and preparing presentation materials from these notes.
4. The timekeeper is responsible for keeping track of the time allotted to each discussion, and keeping the group aware of time remaining. The leader is responsible for deciding what to do when time is running out during a discussion.
5. The devil's advocate will keep his/her mind open to problems, possibilities, and divergent or opposing ideas.

### Resources:

### Learning in Teams: a Student Guide by Graham Gibbs.

## Section 2: When things go wrong. Handling problems during in-class group work

Found at:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/when-things-go-wrong>

Many problems associated with in-class group work can be prevented with careful preparation, specific instructions, and appropriate facilitation. Consult teaching tips sheet “Implementing Group Work in the Classroom” for important guidelines and suggestions on these issues. However, when your students do not respond as you had hoped they would, here are some ways to respond.

**Students are resistant to group work**

* Reiterate your reasons for using this particular small-group task. Emphasize ways in which the resistant student(s) will benefit, and be as specific as possible (e.g., business students will need facilitation skills in their career).
* Have students complete a brief questionnaire in which they reveal why they are resistant to working in groups.
* Hold a plenary discussion about small group tasks and allow students to air concerns developed in response to experiences in past courses. Then outline how your tasks are different.

**Student talks too much or dominates the group**

* Talk to the student privately. Explain that while you are pleased he or she has a lot to contribute, you would like other learners to have more opportunity to think for themselves. Sometimes the student just needs to be made aware of the situation.
* Even if you had not planned to assign roles to group members, do so at an appropriate point during the group task, either for all groups or for only the one(s) with a dominant student. Ensure that some roles require significant periods of silence (e.g., summarizer, detective, recorder, observer, timekeeper, liaison to other groups). Alternately, speak privately to the dominant student and give him or her one of these roles.
* Ask the entire group to reflect on how it is functioning with questions such as: how well did you complete the task as a group? Did someone take the lead, and if so, how did this come about? Whose ideas are most strongly present in the solution to the task? Was there anything you thought but didn’t actually say?
* During long periods of group work, call for regular periods of reflective silence (e.g., after every fifteen to twenty minutes) in which students think (and write) about the points that have been made, contradictions that have surfaced, omissions that should be added, and where the discussion should go next. When signalling for the discussion to resume, invite students who have said little to read out what they have written.

**Student talks too little or is “freeloading”**

* Speak to the student privately to determine the reason for lack of participation, e.g., introversion, fear of looking stupid, feeling unprepared, fearing a trap, feeling unwelcome, past experiences, trying to be cool, lack of reward.
* Consider using even smaller groups. Quiet students may feel more comfortable participating in this situation, and “freeloading” students will be less able to coast on the others’ efforts.
* Ask students occasionally to hand in their group work notes or their preparation notes.
* As when handling dominating students, assign roles to one or all of the group members (see above). Some roles that require active vocal participation are spokesperson, skeptic, organizer, facilitator, liaison to other groups.
* Suggest go-rounds (or circle of voices), so that each group member has to contribute.
* Offer a general reminder, either to the whole class or to a group in particular, that every student has valuable input and that there are no poor questions. Be sure to respond appropriately, then, when students have comments or questions.
* Recognize that quantity is not quality. There is a place for silence in discussion.
* If the students are shy, consider incorporating an electronic discussion into the course. Students may find it easier to contribute on a class bulletin board, chatroom, or listserv.
* Remind students that the content of the group work will be tested on a quiz or test. You could design a test question in which students must summarize their group’s results.

**Students are not on task or are chatting inappropriately**

* Don’t assume that all chatter is inappropriate. Often there is a good reason, even if it is not apparent or immediately connected to the task at hand. One student might be explaining a concept to another student.
* Remind students that their time limit for the group task is approaching. They generally expend the greatest energy as the deadline approaches.
* Ask before the time limit which groups need more time. Consider observing aloud that most students seem finished (or unproductive), and so you will shorten the amount of time originally given.
* If students do not seem to be making progress on the large task, divide the task into smaller tasks, and ask for reports on these subtasks throughout the class period.
* Praise groups publicly that are acting appropriately, pointing out behaviours that are particularly effective.
* Move closer to the chatty students. As a last resort, confront them directly about their chatting, but always give them a chance to explain.

**Student is disruptive**

* Check that the student truly is disruptive and not just momentarily expressing a strong opinion. Also recognize that disagreement is a learning opportunity and is natural and healthy in group functioning.
* Speak to the student privately in order to determine the reason for the disruption.
* Confirm that the disruption is not due to unclear instructions. If group members are disagreeing about what they are supposed to do, clear up the confusion.
* If the disruption persists, change groups regularly in future classes, so that the disruptive student is distributed fairly across a wider range of learners. The problem may disappear with a new group dynamic.

**Students are not listening to fellow group members**

* Comment on the issue in the general class setting.
* Tell students that in the plenary session, you will call on one member of each group (your choice) to summarize the group’s discussion or answers.
* Call a time-out, and restructure the activity so that all students must connect what they say to what the previous person just said.

**References:**

* Brookfield, S.D., & Preskill, S. (1999). Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
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* Race, P. (2000). 500 Tips on Group Learning. London: Kogan Page.
* Slavin, R. E. (1995). Cooperative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice, 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

## Section 3: Meeting strategies to help prepare students for group work

Working in groups is quite different than working individually. One of the main reasons why students find it difficult is that they were not trained to perform effectively in a team setting. An instructor can help by teaching organizational, personal, and discussion skills that will help students manage group dynamics and have a positive teamwork experience. Meetings are key events during group work, and there are several techniques for running effective meetings.

**Planning and running a meeting**

**Steps that should be taken before a meeting happens:**

* plan the meeting carefully: who, what, when, where, why, and how many
* prepare and send out an agenda, identifying issues to be discussed
* set up meeting room send out background information about members

**Steps that should be taken during a meeting**

* start on time
* make introductions of group members
* clearly define roles
* review, revise, and order the agenda
* set clear time limits
* review action items from previous meeting
* focus on one issue at a time

**Steps that should be taken at the end of and after a meeting**

* record final decisions or actions to be taken
* assign tasks to group members
* set deadlines for the tasks
* set the date and place of the next meeting and develop a preliminary agenda
* evaluate the meeting, get feedback from members
* close the meeting positively
* clean up the room
* prepare the group memo, distribute to members and others who need to know

**Group roles**

**Different roles group members may play during a meeting:**

* facilitator/leader
* timekeeper
* note taker
* expert
* mediator
* devil's advocate
* presenter
* progress chaser

**Important tasks that should be performed by the facilitator of a meeting:**

* encouraging participation
* summarizing input
* discouraging domination
* encouraging decision making
* keeping group focused
* making final decisions, if necessary
* clarifying ideas
* delegating roles and tasks
* providing feedback
* keeping the peace
* energizing group members

**Skills that students need to develop to promote effective group work:**

* active and tolerant listening
* communication skills
* flexibility
* accountability
* respect for others' contributions
* helping others to master content
* participation
* giving and receiving constructive feedback
* patience
* managing disagreements
* motivation
* keeping deadlines

**Activities and tools that can be used in a group meeting for:**

**Opening discussion**

* list available resources
* state different perceptions of what the real problem
* brainstorm ideas - all ideas are encouraged and accepted
* legitimize - show an understanding of how others see the problem
* kickstart with an example
* propose some potential solutions
* ask each individual for a possible solution

**Narrowing down the solutions**

* evaluate solutions using some criteria
* make sure solutions address the issues
* rank ideas in order of priority
* categorize solutions
* separate solutions based on "pros/cons"
* look for redundant and overlapping ideas
* force field analysis (what ideas give support to solving the problem? which ones prevent reaching a solution?)

**Closing the discussion**

* majority voting
* consensus
* build up/eliminate (add or subtract from different options to arrive at a new option that everyone can support)
* combine ideas (avoid either/or decisions)

## Section 4: Teamwork skills: being an effective group member

**Found at:**

[**https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-students/being-part-team/teamwork-skills-being-effective-group-member**](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-students/being-part-team/teamwork-skills-being-effective-group-member)

For small groups to function effectively in a course context, students must attend to both the climate within their group and the process by which they accomplish their tasks. Critical to a healthy climate and an effective process are strong communication skills. Below you will find the basic characteristics of effective communicators, plus tips to help students with group climate and process.

Although students can gain many of the skills described below through informal social interactions, they still benefit from having them made explicit. To hone their skills they also need opportunities to practice as well as to receive regular feedback on how they’re doing. Share the information below with your students, use it to set activities for them, and work to incorporate three components of feedback into your plan: instructor comments (oral and/or written), reflective group discussions and/or peer assessment, and self-reflection (see the reflection prompts in Appendix A for ideas).

## Communication skills

To function successfully in a small group, students need to be able to communicate clearly on intellectual and emotional levels. Effective communicators:

* can explain their own ideas
* express their feelings in an open but non-threatening way
* listen carefully to others
* ask questions to clarify others’ ideas and emotions
* can sense how others feel based on their nonverbal communication
* will initiate conversations about group climate or process if they sense tensions brewing
* reflect on the activities and interactions of their group and encourage other group members to do so as well

Regular open communication, in which group members share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, is a must for successful group work. Unspoken assumptions and issues can be very destructive to productive group functioning. When students are willing to communicate openly with one another, a healthy climate will emerge and an effective process can be followed.

## Skills for a healthy group climate

To work together successfully, group members must demonstrate a sense of cohesion. Cohesion emerges as group members exhibit the following skills:

* **Openness**: Group members are willing to get to know one another, particularly those with different interests and backgrounds. They are open to new ideas, diverse viewpoints, and the variety of individuals present within the group. They listen to others and elicit their ideas. They know how to balance the need for cohesion within a group with the need for individual expression.
* **Trust and self-disclosure**: Group members trust one another enough to share their own ideas and feelings. A sense of mutual trust develops only to the extent that everyone is willing to self-disclose and be honest yet respectful. Trust also grows as group members demonstrate personal accountability for the tasks they have been assigned.
* **Support**: Group members demonstrate support for one another as they accomplish their goals. They exemplify a sense of team loyalty and both cheer on the group as a whole and help members who are experiencing difficulties. They view one another not as competitors (which is common within a typically individualistic educational system) but as collaborators.
* **Respect**: Group members communicate their opinions in a way that respects others, focusing on “What can we learn?” rather than “Who is to blame?” See constructive feedback in the process section for more details.

As an instructor, you can use several strategies to encourage students to develop a healthy climate within their small groups:

* Assign students into diverse groups so that they encounter others with different backgrounds and interests.
* Design activities that break the ice, promote awareness of differences within the group, encourage reflection on the stresses of working within a group, and point out the demands of working in a group.
* Have students participate in trust challenges. For example, try the trust-fall, in which individual group members fall backward off a table and are caught by their fellow group members. Or blindfold individual students, and have their group members guide them orally through an obstacle course.
* Encourage students to participate willingly and ask questions of others. To encourage listening skills and ensure that everyone in the group speaks, try the “circle of voices” exercise. See Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) teaching tip “[Group Work in the Classroom: Types of Small Groups](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/group-work-classroom-types-small-groups)”.
* After students have worked in their groups for a couple of weeks, have them fill in a “Are we a team?” checklist individually, then discuss their answers within their group. Have them repeat this exercise when they have completed their task. See appendix B for an example of this checklist.

## Skills for an effective group process

Besides knowing how to develop a healthy group climate, students also need to know how to function so that they are productive and accomplish their tasks effectively. An effective process will emerge as students exhibit these skills:

* **Individual responsibility and accountability**: All group members agree on what needs to be done and by whom. Each student then determines what he or she needs to do and takes responsibility to complete the task(s). They can be held accountable for their tasks, and they hold others accountable for theirs.
* **Constructive Feedback**: Group members are able to give and receive feedback about group ideas. Giving constructive feedback requires focusing on ideas and behaviours, instead of individuals, being as positive as possible, and offering suggestions for improvement. Receiving feedback requires listening well, asking for clarification if the comment is unclear, and being open to change and other ideas.
* **Problem solving**: Group members help the group to develop and use strategies central to their group goals. As such, they can facilitate group decision making and deal productively with conflict. In extreme cases, they know when to approach the professor for additional advice and help.
* **Management and organization**: Group members know how to plan and manage a task, how to manage their time, and how to run a meeting. For example, they ensure that meeting goals are set, that an agenda is created and followed, and that everyone has an opportunity to participate. They stay focused on the task and help others to do so too.
* **Knowledge of roles**: Group members know which roles can be filled within a group (e.g., facilitator, idea-generator, summarizer, evaluator, mediator, encourager, recorder) and are aware of which role(s) they and others are best suited for. They are also willing to rotate roles to maximize their own and others’ group learning experience.

As an instructor, use some of these strategies to encourage students to develop an effective process within their small groups:

* Design the group task so that the students must work together. Group members will be more motivated and committed to working together if they are given a group mark; if you choose to evaluate in this way, be sure to make your expectations extremely clear. See the CTE teaching tip sheet “[Methods for Assessing Group Work](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/methods-assessing-group-work)” for additional ideas.
* Once students are in groups, have them develop, as one of their early assignments, a group contract in which they articulate ground rules and group goals. See the teaching tip “[Making Group Contracts](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/making-group-contracts)” for details. Be sure that groups discuss how they will respond to various scenarios such as absentee or late group members and those who do not complete their assigned tasks.
* Distribute a list of decision-making methods and strategies for conflict resolution. The CTE teaching tip sheet “[Group Decision Making](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/group-decision-making)” is a good place to start. Have each group articulate, based on this list, a set of strategies for decision making and conflict resolution; this list should become part of the group contract. You may also want to offer yourself as an impartial arbitrator in emergency situations, but encourage students to work out problems among themselves.
* Provide students with guidelines for running a meeting, such as setting and following an agenda, specifying time limits, and monitoring progress on the agenda. Consult the CTE teaching tip sheet “[Meeting Strategies to Help Prepare Students for Group Work](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/alternatives-lecturing/group-work/meeting-strategies-help-prepare-students-group-work)” for additional suggestions.
* Teach students effective methods for giving and receiving feedback. For sample methods, see the teaching tip “[Receiving and Giving Effective Feedback](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-student-work/grading-and-feedback/receiving-and-giving-effective-feedback)”. Create an assignment that involves them giving feedback to group members, and make it part of their final grade.
* To help students recognize and make the most of their own and one another’s preferred roles, outline with them a list of team roles (see the teaching tip “[Group Roles](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/group-roles-maximizing-group-performance)” for one such list), have them determine which role(s) suits them best, and give them time to discuss within their groups how their particular role(s) will complement those of other group members. Requiring them to rotate their roles helps them to expand their skills set.

## Appendix A: encouraging self-awareness and reflection in group work

One of the most important things you can do as an instructor is to have students reflect regularly on their group experiences. Their self-reflection will reinforce and further develop critical teamwork skills. Based on your objectives for the group project, create a set of prompts using the questions below. Have students then use these prompts to journal about their reactions to group climate and process. The journals encourage self-reflection and can help students see teamwork issues in new ways and create ideas for resolution. They can also provide a good basis from which students can choose comments to share with their group members in debriefing sessions. If students submit their journals periodically throughout the semester, give them feedback orally or in writing, and to the extent appropriate, discuss in class any trends that you have identified through observation or in the journals (e.g., reassure groups that many are facing similar challenges). Also, requiring all students to submit a final reflective report after the group project can help them to see the value of the teamwork expertise they have developed through practice.

### Climate

* What have you enjoyed the most/the least about getting to know your group members?
* How is your attitude towards your group members demonstrated in how you function within the group?
* How do you demonstrate trust and openness towards the other members and their ideas?
* Do you give honest opinions? If not, why not?
* How much do you feel you can rely on your group members to complete the required task(s)?
* How do you make sure that group members feel supported, encouraged, and appreciated for their work?
* How does the team ensure that all voices are heard?
* Do you participate willingly in the discussion? If not, why not?
* Do others appear to understand your ideas? If not, why not?
* What do you do if another person’s ideas are unclear?
* What do you focus on when others speak? How could you improve your listening skills?
* How do you respond to others’ ideas? How do they respond to yours? What could be improved?

### Process

* What are your group’s ground rules and goals? What changes to these rules and goals might improve the functioning of your group?
* How is everyone encouraged to stay accountable to the tasks they have been assigned?
* To what extent do you and others follow the feedback methods laid out in class? How could you and your group members improve the way you give and receive feedback?
* To what extent does your group reflect on how well its goals are being achieved? How would more (or less) discussion about goals help or hinder your group’s functioning?
* How are decisions made in your group? Who is involved and in which ways? What has been effective about the processes you have used? How could your decision-making processes be improved?
* What happens if a group member is unhappy or uncomfortable with a decision made by the group?
* What conflicts have arisen within your group? How (if at all) have the conflicts been resolved? What role do you play in resolving these conflicts? What could you (or others) do to improve your group’s ability to deal productively with conflict?
* How do your meetings typically proceed? What do you accomplish and in how much time? What is effective about your group functioning during meetings? What changes would improve your meetings?
* Who has emerged as the leader in your group? Which other roles do you see team members playing? Which role(s) do you play? Which role do you prefer and why?

## Appendix B: “Are We a Team?” checklist (Levin & Kent, 2001)

Check off the statements that accurately represent your group. Be prepared to discuss your choices afterwards with your group. Also consider ways to improve your group’s functioning, especially as it relates to the statements you did not check off.

* We all show equal commitment to our objective.
* We all take part in deciding how work should be allocated.
* We are committed to helping each other learn.
* We acknowledge good contributions from team members.
* We handle disagreements and conflicts constructively within the team.
* We are able to give constructive criticism to one another and to accept it ourselves.
* We all turn up to meetings and stay to the end.
* We are good at making sure that everyone knows what’s going on.
* When one of us is under pressure, others offer to help him or her.
* We trust each other.
* We remain united even when we disagree.
* We support each other to outsiders.
* We feel comfortable and relaxed with one another.

## Resources and References

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## Section 5: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing: Understanding the Stages of Team Formation

## Adapted from <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_86.htm>

## About the Model

Psychologist Bruce Tuckman first came up with the memorable phrase "forming, storming, norming, and performing" in his 1965 article, "[Developmental Sequence in Small Groups](http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/bul/63/6/384/)." He used it to describe the path that most teams follow on their way to high performance. Later, he added a fifth stage, "adjourning" (which is sometimes known as "mourning").

### Forming

Teams go through an initial phase of forming, and every time a new member is

introduced to the team, there will be an element of returning to this stage

* Members are getting to know eachother and it is important to build trust
* The vision and goals of the team are not necessarily shared or known by all
* Members are not all clear about their role – considering ‘what am I here for?’
* This is where buy-in and commitment needs to happen
* There is a high-dependence on a leader for direction

**Storming**

* Members are starting to define and understand their roles, but there may be some conflict as members figure out how they are to work together – as individuals and as a team
* Different ideas compete for consideration
* Now that team members feel comfortable with each other, they may confront each other’s ideas and perspectives
* The conflict at this stage can be positive to work through the issues and ensure that team members have the same understanding of roles and goals, and to ensure that good ideas and problem solving occurs - especially if trust and buy in is built in forming stage to allow for

**Norming**

* Members share the responsibility for the tasks and success of the teams goals
* Members agree about roles and processes for problem solving

**Performing  (not all teams reach this stage)**

* Members are motivated and are able to work independently and interdependently
* Work is collaborative and members take initiative
* Trust and openness is high
* Work is done for the team goals and not the individual
* The sum is greater than the parts

### Adjourning

Many teams will reach this stage eventually. For example, project teams exist for only a fixed period, and even permanent teams may be disbanded through organizational restructuring.

Team members who like routine, or who have developed close working relationships with other team members, may find this stage difficult, particularly if their future now looks uncertain.

## Using the Tool

As a team leader, your aim is to help your people perform well, as quickly as possible. To do this, you'll need to change your approach at each stage.

Follow the steps below to ensure that you're doing the right thing at the right time:

1. Identify the stage of team development that your team is at from the descriptions above.
2. Now consider what you need to do to move towards the performing stage. Figure 1, below, will help you understand your role, and think about how you can move the team forward.
3. Schedule regular reviews of where your team is, and adjust your behavior and leadership approach appropriately.

| **Stage** | **Activities** |
| --- | --- |
| **Forming** | * Direct the team, and establish clear objectives, both for the [team as a whole](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_95.htm)   and for [individual team members](http://www.mindtools.com/community/Bite-SizedTraining/SettingGoals.php). |
| **Storming** | * Establish processes and structures. * Build [trust](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/building-trust-team.htm)   and [good relationships](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/good-relationships.htm)   between team members. * [Resolve conflicts](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_79.htm)   swiftly if they occur. Provide support, especially to those team members who are less secure. * Remain [positive](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_89.htm)   and firm in the face of challenges to your leadership, or to the team's goal. * Explain the "forming, storming, norming, and performing" idea, so that people understand why problems are occurring, and so that they see that things will get better in the future. [Coach](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_15.htm)   team members in [assertiveness](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Assertiveness.htm)   and [conflict resolution skills](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm)  , where this is necessary. * Use psychometric indicators such as [Myers-Briggs](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_51.htm)   and the [Margerison-McCann Team Management Profile](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_58.htm)   to help people learn about different work styles and strengths. |
| **Norming** | * Step back and help team members take responsibility for progress towards the goal. (This is a good time to arrange a [team-building](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_52.htm)   event.) |
| **Performing** | * [Delegate](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_98.htm)   tasks and projects as far as you can. Once the team is achieving well, you should aim to have as light a touch as possible. You will now be able to start focusing on other goals and areas of work. |
| **Adjourning** | * Take the time to celebrate the team's achievements – you may work with some of your people again, and this will be much easier if people view past experiences positively. |

## Section 6: the 5 Dysfunctions of a team

Found at: <http://www.tablegroup.com/books/dysfunctions>

*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* outlines the root causes of politics and dysfunction on the teams where you work, and the keys to overcoming them. Counter to conventional wisdom, the causes of dysfunction are both identifiable and curable. However, they don't die easily. Making a team functional and cohesive requires levels of courage and discipline that many groups cannot seem to muster.

**The Model**



* **Dysfunction #1: Absence of Trust**

The fear of being vulnerable with team members prevents the building of trust within the team.

* **Dysfunction #2: Fear of Conflict**

The desire to preserve artificial harmony stifles the occurrence of productive ideological conflict.

* **Dysfunction #3: Lack of Commitment**

The lack of clarity or buy-in prevents team members from making decisions they will stick to.

* **Dysfunction #4: Avoidance of Accountability**

The need to avoid interpersonal discomfort prevents team members from holding one another accountable.

* **Dysfunction #5: Inattention to Results**

The pursuit of individual goals and personal status erodes the focus on collective success.

**5 Dysfunctions of Teams**

Each one of these builds upon the next and is prerequisite for the following. It is

important to think about the role of forming and storming – how important it is to build trust and shared vision, and shared norms at the beginning. Consider the role of positive conflict versus destructive conflict.

**1. Absence of trust – members may:**

* Conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another
* Hesitate to ask for help or feedback, or to offer help outside their area or role
* Jump to conclusions or make assumptions about the intentions and aptitudes of others without seeking clarification

**2. Fear of conflict – without trust, team members will not be open to conflict,**

**which in turn:**

* Will have artificial harmony instead of constructive dialogue and sharing of ideas
* Conflict and dissension will happen in cliques and back-channels
* Members will ignore controversial topics that would be critical to team success and growth

**3. Lack of commitment – as a result of lack of trust and sharing of opinions:**

* There will not be a shared vision of direction and priorities
* A lack of or delay in action, or non-productivity may result
* Discussions and decisions will be revisited

**4. Avoidance of accountability**

* Encourage mediocrity / low standards
* Deadlines and responsibilities are missed
* Leader must hold the sole burden of discipline – no group norms, or individual member responsibility to the team
* Members may resent others for different standards of performance

**5. Inattention to results**

* Loses achievement-oriented team members
* Does not accomplish potential and often does not meet goals
* Encourages team members to focus on their own goals – sometimes to the detriment of other team members or the team’s goals