

## **The Four Stages of Group Growth**

### **Stage 1: FORMING**

In this stage, there is a transition from individual to member status, and a testing of the leader's guidance both formally and informally.

Forming includes these feelings...

- Excitement, anticipation, and optimism
- Pride in being chosen for the project
- Initial, tentative attachment to the team
- Suspicion, fear, an anxiety about the job ahead

And these behaviors...

- Attempts to define the task and decide how it will be accomplished
- Attempts to determine acceptable group behavior and deal with group problems
- Decision on what information needs to be gathered
- Lofty, abstract discussions of concepts and issues; or, for some members, impatience with these discussions
- Discussion of symptoms or problems not relevant to the task; difficulty in identifying relevant problems
- Complaints about the organization and barriers to the task

### **Stage 2: STORMING**

This stage is the most difficult for the team. Impatient about the lack of progress, but still too inexperienced to know much about decision-making, members argue about just what actions the team should make. They rely solely on themselves and resist collaborating with other team members.

Storming includes these feelings...

- Resistance to the task and to approaches different from what each individual member is comfortable using
- Sharp fluctuations in attitude about the team and the project's chance of success

And these behaviors...

- Arguing among members, even when they agree on the real issue
- Defensiveness and competition; factions and "choosing sides"

### **Stage 3: NORMING**

In this stage, members reconcile competing loyalties and responsibilities. They accept their roles on the team and start to use each other to complete the task.

Norming includes these feelings...

- A new ability to express criticism constructively
- Acceptance of membership in the team
- Relief that it seems everything is going to work out

And these behaviors...

- An attempt to achieve harmony by avoiding conflict
- More friendliness, confiding in each other, and sharing of personal problems, discussing the team's dynamics
- A sense of team cohesion, a common spirit and goals

### **Stage 4: PERFORMING**

By this stage, the team has settled its relationships and expectations. The team members have discovered and accept each other's strengths and weaknesses, and learned what their roles are.

Performing includes these feelings...

- Members having insight into personal and group processes, and better understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses
- Satisfaction at the team's progress

And these behaviors...

- Constructive self-change
- Ability to prevent or work through group problems
- Close attachment to the team