Group Dynamics Objectives

• Explain the significance of cohesiveness, roles, norms, and ostracism in regard to the behavior of group members.
• Identify and describe stages of group development.
• Explain the causes and effects of groupthink
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Fundamental Group Dynamics

• What Is a Group?
  – Two or more freely interacting individuals who share a common identity and purpose.

• Types of Groups
  – Informal groups: a collection of people seeking friendship and acceptance that satisfies esteem needs.
  – Formal groups: a collection of people created to do something productive that contributes to the success of the larger organization.
Fundamental Group Dynamics (cont’d)

- Attraction to Groups
  - Attractiveness of the group
  - Cohesiveness of the group

- Roles
  - Socially determined ways of behaving in specific positions.
    - A set of expectations concerning what a person must, must not, or may do in a position.
    - The actual behavior of a person who occupies the position.
Norms

- The standards (degrees of acceptability and unacceptability) for conduct that help individuals judge what is right or good or bad in a given social setting.
- Norms are culturally derived and vary from one culture to another.
- Norms are usually unwritten, yet have a strong influence on individual behavior.
- Norms go above and beyond formal rules and written policies.
Fundamental Group Dynamics (cont’d)

• Reasons that groups enforce norms
  – To facilitate the survival of the group.
  – To simplify or clarify role expectations.
  – To help group members avoid embarrassing situations.
  – To express key group values and enhance the group’s unique identity.

• Ostracism
  – Rejection by the group for violation of its norms.
Group Cohesiveness

Factors increasing cohesiveness
- Intergroup competition
- Attraction to group
- Group success
- Agreement on goals
- Mutual influence

Factors reducing cohesiveness
- Group size
- Disagreement on goals
- Intragroup competition
- Domination by the few
- Unpleasant experiences
Cohesiveness and Performance Norms

- High Cohesiveness and High Performance Norms
- High Cohesiveness and Low Performance Norms
- Low Cohesiveness and Low Performance Norms
- Low Cohesiveness and High Performance Norms
Group Development

- Characteristics of a Mature Group
  - Members are aware of each other’s assets and liabilities.
  - Individual differences are accepted.
  - The group’s authority and interpersonal relationships are recognized.
  - Group decisions are made through rational discussion.
  - Conflict is over group issues, not emotional issues.
  - Members are aware of the group’s processes and their own roles in them.
Group Development (cont’d)

- Stages of Group Development
  - Stage 1: Orientation
    - Uncertainty about most everything is high.
  - Stage 2: Conflict and change
    - Subgroups struggle for control; roles are undefined.
  - Stage 3: Cohesion
    - Consensus on leadership, structure, and procedures is reached.
  - Stage 4: Delusion
    - Members misperceive that the group has reached maturity.
Group Development (cont’d)

- Six Stages of Group Development (cont’d)
  - Stage 5: Disillusion
    - Subgroups form; disenchantment, diminished cohesiveness and commitment to the group.
  - Stage 6: Acceptance
    - A trusted and influential group member steps forward and moves the group from conflict to cohesion so that it becomes highly effective and efficient.
    - Member expectations are more realistic.
Group decision making

• Problems in group decisions
  ♦ Individuals may monopolize the discussion
  ♦ Individuals may not contribute
  ♦ Goal displacement - may become more important for members to “win” (vs. develop the best solution)
  ♦ There may be too much or too little conflict
  ♦ Other?
Conformity and Groupthink

• Conformity
  – Complying with the role expectations and norms perceived by the majority to be appropriate in a particular situation.

• Research on Conformity
  – The Hot Seat (Asch)
  – Following the Immoral Majority
    • There is a tendency for individuals to go along with the group (blind conformity) when faced with overwhelming opposition by the group.
• Groupthink (Irving Janis)
  - A mode of thinking (blind conformity) that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members’ strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action.
Problems in group decisions

- **Groupthink** - excessive cohesiveness
  - Illusion of invulnerability
  - Stereotypes
  - Moral superiority
  - Rationalization
  - Self-censorship
  - Illusion of unanimity
  - Mindguarding

- Examples: Cuban missile crisis, Challenger I & II, ….
Managing decision making in groups

- The role of the leader
  - Facilitate communication between individuals and integrate and unify responses
  - Balance task and social elements

- Minimize groupthink
  - assign critical evaluator role to each member
  - encourage contrary opinions, bring in outside experts
  - create a “devil's advocate” role
  - use heterogeneous groups
Managing decision making in groups

- Manage group polarization
  ◆ Create a shift - call for initial vote preceding discussion - arrange for certain (high status) individuals to speak first - may induce shift toward initially voiced directions
  ◆ Suppress a shift - suppress early mention of preferences, require members to write down pro/con considerations in advance and share
Teams and Trust

- Cross-Functional Teams
  - Task groups that are staffed with a mix of specialists focused on a common objective.
    - May or may not be self-managed.
    - Membership is assigned, not voluntary.
    - Challenge is getting specialists to be boundary spanners.
Teams and Trust (cont’d)

• Virtual Teams
  – Task groups with members who are physically dispersed yet linked electronically to accomplish a common goal.
  • Face-to-face contact is minimal or nonexistent.
  • Primary forms of communication are electronic interchanges (e-mail, voice mail, web-based project software, and videoconferences).
Team and Trust (cont’d)

• What Makes Workplace Teams Effective?
  – Innovative ideas
  – Goals accomplished
  – Adaptability to change
  – High person/team commitment
  – Being rated highly by upper management
Team, Teamwork, and Trust (cont’d)

- Trust: A Key to Team Effectiveness
  - Trust: a belief in the intentions and abilities of others.
  - The primary responsibility for creating a climate of trust falls on the manager.
  - Trust is the key to establishing productive interpersonal relationships.
  - Trust encourages self-control, reduces the need for direct supervision, and expands managerial control.
Team and Trust (cont’d)

Six Ways to Build Trust

2. Support: be an approachable person.
3. Respect: delegate important duties and listen.
5. Predictability: be dependable and consistent.
6. Competence: be a good role model.