Stages in group development - one model

Tuckman and Jensen (1977) have suggested some common phases for team growth and development. They argue that all groups or teams tend to exhibit aspects of the five successive stages they propose, which can be summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages in group development</th>
<th>Focus in facilitation activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Forming.</td>
<td>This has been described as the cautiously excited stage, where members explore the boundaries of acceptable group behaviour. Mixed with excitement and pride at being selected for the team, there is often some trepidation and anxiety about the success of the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Caution</td>
<td>• Uncertainty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Storming.</td>
<td>This phase combines some resistance to the task with fluctuations in attitude about the team's chances of success. Members may show impatience, jealousy and perhaps a tacit or overt recognition of a pecking order within the team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conflict</td>
<td>• Power struggles</td>
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### Stage 3: Norming.
- Cohesion
- Mutual support
- Willingness to consider alternatives
- Sharing
- Joking

At this point, most of the members understand and accept the group norms, or ground rules, including the roles they are asked to play as individuals. Feelings include a sense of cooperation and helpfulness, occasionally avoidance of conflict, a growing sense of team spirit and progress on the task at hand.

**Be an observer primarily.**

- Encourage other group members to take on task and maintenance functions.
- Encourage leadership to shift from member to member
- Accept and air suggestions for alternate approaches or revised procedural rules
- Encourage and assist systematic planning for task achievement

### Stage 4: Performing.
- Full involvement
- Acceptance of other views
- Voluntary effort
- Warm relationships
- Creativity

This is the stage at which the group performs most effectively. The group is 'turned on' and can build on individual strengths and minimise weaknesses. People often form close attachments at this stage and show an ability to work through problems constructively.

**Be a coach and counsellor.**

- Periodically remind group members of any criteria against which performance can/should be usefully judged.
- Keep members alert to time and resource constraints, as required.
- Be prepared to caution group against a natural tendency to 'over-performance' in event they enjoy marked success.

### Stage 5: Adjourning.

At this stage, the team members end the task and the relationship and move on to the next challenge. If the team has been successful, this can be one of the most difficult stages. If the team has not been successful, the sense of unfinished business can create a blockage to future individual group development.

**Conduct a debrief and evaluation.**

- Ask group to 'stand back' and take stock.
- Ask them to reflect on their work, comment on perceived value, the outcomes, and the experience.
- Identify what the group thought went well, what could be improved.

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