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ABSTRACT

This handbook is part of a set of instructional materials developed to facilitate the efforts of educators in planning and implementing comprehensive career guidance programs. (See CE 018 130 for the final report of the Georgia Comprehensive Career Guidance Project.) The focus of this handbook is on group leadership and is intended to help prospective group leaders prepare for their staff development activities in career guidance by reviewing some of the basic principles of group dynamics and group procedures. The information is presented under the following topics: definition of group; group atmosphere; leadership; roles within the group; goal formation; cohesiveness; facilitating cohesiveness in an established group; formulating the group; facilitating the general discussion; facilitating group interaction and learning; and summarizing the group activities. This handbook accompanies a series of staff development training manuals for both the elementary (CE 018 139-144) and secondary (CE 018 147, CE 018 150, CE 018 152, CE 018 154, CE 018 157-158, CE 018 161, and CE 018 163) levels. (BM)

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**STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN CAREER GUIDANCE:
A FACILITATOR'S HANDBOOK**

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Preface

This handbook is a part of a set of instructional materials developed to facilitate the efforts of Georgia educators in the planning and implementation of comprehensive career guidance programs. Such program improvement efforts are affected by several factors including the quality of related staff development programs. In turn, the quality of the specific in-service program is dependent upon the quality of the instruction materials and upon the quality of the instruction or group leadership. The focus of this handbook is on the latter factor—the quality of instruction or group leadership. Our purpose is to help prospective group leaders prepare for their staff development activities in career guidance by reviewing some basic principles of group dynamics and group procedures. The handbook is designed to serve as an overview to be read by individual workshop leaders and perhaps, to be discussed with others prior to the implementation of a comprehensive staff development program. We hope that the handbook will stimulate your interest, your competence, and your confidence in group leadership.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN CAREER GUIDANCE:

A FACILITATOR'S HANDBOOK

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THE GROUP DEFINED

The term "group" has been variously defined by different authors writing in different academic contents. A "group" as it is used in this handbook refers specifically to "a collection of three or more persons who function in an interdependent, cohesive manner to fully accomplish the established goal(s)." In this context a group of individuals may be distinguished from an "aggregate" of persons in that the latter does not require interdependence of members to accomplish the goal(s). To illustrate further the difference between a group of persons and an aggregate of persons consider the following two situations;

Situation 1: People frequently are seen in large numbers at the movies. It might be stated that the persons have a common goal—that of being entertained. The persons comprising the Aggregate however, are not interdependent upon one another to accomplish being entertained, nor do they share any feeling of belonging (cohesiveness) to the group.

This condition is not entirely true with live entertainment. The size of the audience and its responsiveness (aggregate) definitely affects the performance of the entertainers. In this loose sense, they need each other, but not in any personal way. Another example might include pedestrians waiting for a street light to change. Each person has the same specific goal but absolutely no need for any other. However, even here, if one person crosses against the light his/her behavior might influence others to do the same.

Situation 2: Five persons set the goal of writing a textbook and having it ready for publication in five weeks. Normally, it would be impossible for any one or two persons to perform the necessary research, write the manuscript, edit, type, and have it ready for the printer in the five weeks allowed while still satisfactorily performing one's main occupation (assuming the authors are not full-time writers). In this case, all group members might agree to research

the material, after which Mr. A and Ms. B. would take responsibility for the writing of certain chapters. Ms. C and Ms. D might agree to write additional chapters and edit the work of Mr. A and Ms. B. Mr. E might take responsibility for editing Ms. C and Ms. D's work along with typing the manuscript as per the printer's request. In this manner one can see the group of five persons sharing in the feeling of belonging to the group and functioning in an interdependent manner to accomplish the goals which had been set.

Situation 3: A military combat unit provides an even more dramatic example of group member interdependence. The failure of even one member to perform his expected function could cause the annihilation of the entire unit.

THE ATMOSPHERE

The atmospheres in which groups may be conducted are, to a large extent, dependent upon the style of leadership employed by significant persons in the group. Broadly speaking the atmosphere of the group may be either (1) democratic, (2) autocratic, or (3) laissez-faire, or various combinations of these.

The Democratic Condition

In this condition the group leader functions in the early stages as an initiator (suggests new ideas, topics, etc.) and quickly moves to the role of clarifier, reflector, and /or interpreter. As the clarifier, the leader verbalizes, clarifies, and/or integrates the relationship among various feelings or ideas expressed by group members. The leader in the reflector's role may simply restate (in different words or in the same words) the ideas or feelings expressed by one or more members of the group. As interpreter, the leader must decode the feelings or perceptions expressed in the group. Sometimes these

*initiator
clarifier
reflector
interpreter*

feelings are expressed non-verbally and the leader is expected to interpret these cues as well as the verbalized feelings. Another group member may at times assume this function.

In the democratic atmosphere members of the group are treated in an egalitarian manner. Voting, to determine group goals, is not uncommon, nor is periodic re-assessment of goals by members with further voting.

Equality

A consensus decision may also occur in a democratic group and is usually quite effective, although it requires more time to determine goals than raising a majority decision. In the voting situation a dissenting minority often causes difficulty in the execution of the decision by refusing to cooperate with the leader and/or group.

The Autocratic Condition:

In this condition the leader is set up as a structurer, information giver, evaluator and occasionally as an expeditor and/or supporter. Functioning as the structurer the autocratic leader alone determines the group's goal(s) and purpose(s) and may channel participants' verbalizations in specific directions to meet the leader's perceptions of the need(s) of the group at given times. In the information-giving role, the leader is set up as an expert offering authoritative facts or generalizations relating to the group situation. The evaluative function of the leader compares the group's functioning to some criteria (frequently external to the group) while the expediting function serves to facilitate the group members to participate, make decisions, or, in general, stimulate the group to be more productive or active. The leader's function as supporter is to communicate understanding and/or acceptance of the contributions of the group members.

*Structurer
Info-giver
Evaluator
Expediter*

The Laissez-Faire Condition:

Under this condition, the "leader" basically retreats from a position of significance and allows the group to develop in a leaderless manner. The "leader" may choose to retreat by functioning primarily as an information seeker. In this role the leader would ask group members for their suggestions, information, or facts.

*Information/
Opinion
Seeker*

Another role which the leader might assume is that of opinion seeker in which the leader attempts to extract suggestions for group members relative to alternative methods for accomplishing group goals. (In reality there probably is no such thing as a leaderless group in that one of the significant members of the group will sense that there is no leader and move in to fill this void.)

One should not anticipate that any one of these leader determined conditions will exist in a pure form over an extended time period. To force adherence to one of these at all times could result in the failure of the group to achieve its goals. Other factors also affect the atmosphere of the group; such as, the nature of the task and changes in it, the composition of group membership including turnover and time limitations. The significance of these factors will be discussed later.

LEADERSHIP

Assessment of Leadership Style:

It appears that leaders with different personalities function with varying effectiveness in democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire climates. For some leaders it may be natural to function in a democratic atmosphere, while others may find it more natural or convenient to operate in a laissez-faire or autocratic climate. It is usual for an individual (leader) to be more comfortable in one particular climate than in another. It is the unusual leader who is equally effective and comfortable operating in all three climates.

At this point it may be beneficial to reflect back to the opportunities you have had to participate in or lead groups. Ask yourself the following questions to help you determine your preference for group climate.

1. Can I comfortably sit down and allow another group member to function as the leader—even when I disagree with the person's opinion? yes no
2. Am I comfortable allowing the group to formulate its own goals without my input? yes no
3. Do I function well as a "verbal minor" of an individual or the group? yes no
4. Do I feel most comfortable when I feel that I have full control over the process of the group? yes no

Answers

1. If you answered yes to number 1, it appears that you may prefer a laissez-faire atmosphere. A no answer to number 1 indicates a preference for an autocratic climate.
2. A yes response to question 2 indicates a laissez-faire leadership style, while a no answer shows a preference for a democratic climate.

3. An affirmative response to question 3 indicates that you might be more attracted to operating in a democratic climate rather than in an autocratic or laissez-faire environment (the no response).
4. An affirmative response to question 4 indicates that you feel most comfortable when you can determine the process of the group in advance. Your decisions would be final. A no response suggests that such a condition would not please you.

Summary of answers:

Question 1	Laissez-faire	Autocratic
Question 2	Laissez-faire	Democratic or Autocratic
Question 3	Democratic	Autocratic or Laissez-faire
Question 4	Autocratic	Democratic or Laissez-faire

Leader Characteristics:

Leadership qualities and styles of leadership are probably two of the most researched areas in group dynamics. A brief definition of leadership is the ability to influence the opinions, attitudes and behaviors of other people. Surprisingly little conclusive evidence has been compiled regarding the best or most effective type of group leader. To a large extent this is due to the fact that there are so many different types of groups which require varying leadership qualities and/or styles of leadership. Consider for a moment some of the different types of groups. These might include task groups, counseling groups, various social groups including sororities, fraternities, men's and ladies' clubs, discussion groups, therapy groups, guidance groups and so on. Overall, however, these qualities of an effective leader have emerged and appear to cut across groups:

1. Flexibility-the effective leader is able to function in diverse roles (see: roles within groups in following section). The leader is able to adapt to new events, new group members, a changing environment, etc.

2. Delegates authority-the leader is able to assess her/his leadership styles, skills, knowledge, etc. and does not hesitate to assign leadership roles to others in the group, who have greater knowledge or skill in dealing with others.
3. Maintains psychological distance-while the leader is open and genuine to all members of the group, the leader does not become a "pal" to one or more members of the group.
4. Promotes group cohesion-the leader makes every attempt to develop unity in the group, to develop a sense of pride in belonging to the group, and to increase the members' identity with the group (see: cohesiveness).

ROLES WITHIN THE GROUP

Moreno (1974) indicates that the term "role" has been in use since the time of Aristotle. While its present meaning has changed somewhat since the time of ancient Greece, the fact that it was so early identified and described attests to its importance. In a modern context the term "role" shall be defined to mean a particular life script, characteristic scheme of response, or method of behaving which may be of either long or short duration.

Certain roles which have been noted to exist at one time or another in all groups are outlined on the following pages.

NOTES:

ROLE DEFINITIONS

1-12
Positive, goal oriented roles.

1-4
Most commonly employed roles.

1-2
Laissez-faire leader

3-4
Autocratic in nature.

5-9
Most typical of the group leader-- regardless of style. Most facilitative.

1. Information Seeker: Asks for clarification of suggestions made in terms of their factual adequacy, for authoritative information and for facts pertinent to the problem being discussed.
2. Opinion Seeker: Asks not primarily for the facts of the case but for a clarification of the values involved in a suggestion made or in alternative suggestions.
3. Information Giver: Offers facts or generalizations which are "authoritative" or relates his own experience pertinently to the group problem.
4. Opinion Giver: States his belief or opinion pertinently to a question, a suggestion made, or to alternative suggestions.
5. Structurer: May define the purposes of the group, establish goals, and describe the group process. Sets the stage for role playing discussions. May summarize the discussions of previous interviews to channel immediate discussion to a specific direction.
6. Initiator: Suggests or proposes to the group new ideas or a changed way of regarding the group problems or goal. The initiation may take the form of a proposed new procedure for the group or a new way of organizing the group for the task ahead.
7. Clarifier: Shows or clarifies the relationship among various feelings, ideas, and suggestions or tries to integrate feelings, ideas, and suggestions.
8. Interpreter: Interprets feelings expressed by members of the group or interprets the significance of non-verbal behavior.
9. Reflector: Reflects feelings expressed by members of the group. This reflection is usually limited to specific feelings which have been expressed by the person to whom the statement was directed. Occasionally the counselor or one of the clients may reflect a "group feeling."
10. Evaluator: Subjects the accomplishments of the group to some standard or set of standards of group functioning in the context of the group task.
11. Expeditor: Encourages and facilitates the participation of others. Prods the group to action or decision; attempts to stimulate or arouse the group to "greater" or "higher quality" activity.
12. Supporter: Agrees with and accepts the contributions of others. Indicates understanding and acceptance of other points of view, ideas and suggestions.

3-9

Generally construed as negative force relative to group accomplishing its goals.

13. **Passive Resister:** Displays a lack of involvement in the group's work. Actions may take the form of cynicism, nonchalance, horse-play, and other forms of "out-of-field" behavior.
14. **Non-Participant:** Does not participate in the group discussion at all but shows no signs of active or passive resistance.
15. **Blocker:** Tries to avoid an issue being discussed. Attempts to maintain or bring back an issue after the group has rejected or by-passed it.
16. **Aggressor:** Exhibits hostile behavior toward others or attacks the topic of discussion. Deflates the status of others. Expresses disapproval of values, acts, or feelings of others.
17. **Recognition Seeker:** Calls attention to self by boasting, monopolizing the conversation, or other forms of exhibitionistic behavior. Struggles to avoid being placed in an inferior position.
18. **Help Seeker:** Tries to evoke sympathy from others through expressions of insecurity, personal confusion, or deprecation of self.
19. **Dominator:** Tries to assert authority or superiority in manipulating the group or certain members of the group. The dominator gives directions authoritatively or interrupts the contributions of others.

At this point it should be noted that a group member may function in several of the roles outlined above within a relatively short period of time (30 minutes or less). Or, the individual may elect to function in a single role for an indefinite span of time. Both of these conditions are commonly observed in ongoing groups of various types and are quite normal.

Further, an individual in the group has two methods of adopting one or more of the various roles. Role assumption occurs when an individual freely chooses a desired role and behaves in accordance with the role description. Here the key is that the individual decides what role to assume based on her/his personal needs, desires, perception of self, and/or perception of the group situation. Role assignment is the alternate method in which an individual is ascribed a particular role based on the group's perception of the "best" role for that individual. The key here is that the individual is not free to choose a desired role. Role assignment occurs when the group sanctions a particular role for an individual. In general the group sanctioning of a particular role relative to an individual may either be positive or negative, depending upon the group's intention of the sanction as well as the individual's need to behave in a specific role.

It is important to remember that role assumption and role assignment are almost always interactive and mutually supportive, very rarely in direct contradiction. However, contradiction could exist, or more likely develop, creating a dissonant condition within the group which needs to be resolved.

Sometimes an individual may wish to change his assigned and/or assumed role. Roles in groups tend to become relatively fixed quite early in the life of the group, and the group resists alterations in

role expectancies. A member wishing to change roles may need the leader to assist him/her in gaining group acceptance of different role behaviors from the role(s) which had been previously acted out. The leader needs to be sensitive to indications that a member is becoming uncomfortable in an assigned role. If role experimentation is built-in early as part of the group norm, the shift from one role to another becomes easier to accomplish.

Consider below the four situations in which the roles are (1) assumed, (2) assigned, (3) assigned, positive sanction, (4) assigned, negative sanction.

Situation 1: A counselor working in a large urban middle school was asked to work with a group of eight to ten acting out students. The counselor decided that given this particular type of student, an externally imposed group goal (imposed by counselor with input from teachers and administrators) was the most appropriate. The counselor planned to structure the group activities so as to minimize the potential for acting out during the first two group sessions (automatic).

A move toward a more democratic style would occur when and if the students exhibited positive controls in their behavior. By the third session it appeared that most all of the students had taken on positive roles a majority of the time. Billy, however, had entered the group as a dominator (see role definition) and continued in that role for all three sessions. Whether Billy was acting consciously and realized his tendency to dominate or was acting unconsciously to satisfy some inner need (possibly the need to be a "leader" through control) was unclear. It was clear to the counselor and some group members however, that Billy had chosen (assumed) this group role and that it was detrimental to the group in its goal effort.

Situation 2: A counselor was assigned the task of facilitating teacher-administrative interaction by the County Superintendent. The counselor was told not to take sides in the discussions but was to see that a compromise/solution regarding teacher-administrative misconceptions was effected.

Situation 3: A group composed of the teachers in a small elementary school was given the task of formulating goals, processes, objectives, and activities for a new program which was to be implemented in the school. Ms. Jones, a teacher in the school had just returned from a two year sabbatical leave during which time she completed her doctorate in curriculum planning. At the first task meeting Ms. Jones was appointed task

leader by group consensus even though she stated that she was unfamiliar with the new program to be implemented.

Situation 4: In another elementary school the principal selected seven teachers to serve on a committee to determine how to best modify the curriculum to make it more relevant to today's youth. Mr. Smith, who has made it clear that he cares little for any new program, attempts to block the group from reaching its goal by asking meaningless questions, interrupting others and by continually asking persons to repeat themselves. By the third meeting, Mr. Smith was not recognized by the leader, group members failed to repeat for him and he was "talked over" as the attempted to interrupt others.

GOAL FORMATION

Goals may be either (1) group formulated through consensus of opinion, (2) imposed by a power source or clique from within the group, or (3) externally imposed from an agent outside of the group. Invariably, one might assume that goals which are group formulated have the highest probability of being achieved. In many instances, this will be the case since members tend to work harder to achieve goals in which they have a personal investment. However, the group's potential for the attainment of the goals ultimately will be dependent upon the individuals comprising the group and upon the resources readily available to the group members. It follows that the members of the group must have the necessary skills, intelligence, etc. for goal attainment regardless of how the group's goals are formulated.

The goal or goals may involve a number of intermediary steps (long range) or may be attained directly in a relatively brief amount of time (short range). Determining whether a goal is long or short range will depend to a large extent upon the abilities of the members comprising the group as well as their willingness (capability) to function as a group.

Consider the three methods of goal formation in the statements which follow. See if you are able to determine (1) how the goals are formed.

ulated (by the group, from clique within the group, or from external source) and (2) whether the goals are long or short range.

1. A work group has been formed by the director of a telephone company "to suggest new ways to improve service to customers and reduce operating costs." A written report of suggestions is expected.
2. A number of telephone employees formed a group for the purpose of helping earthquake victims in a South American country. They desire "to help as much as possible."
3. The Vegetable Club which meets the first Tuesday of every other month is in the middle of discussing to whom and in what way surplus vegetables should be distributed. Mr. and Mrs. E and their neighbors state that they both have trucks and would be willing to pick up and deliver the surplus vegetables if the vegetables are given to their favorite charity. The group so decides.

Answers

1. The first group had its goal externally imposed. It may either be a short range or a long range goal, depending on how the members construe the task of writing suggestions.

For example, in the short range situation the workers might decide to meet once after work for one hour. One group member might be appointed or elected to write down the various suggestions given within the hour. This list might then be submitted to the director.

In the long range situation the workers might meet and decide to remain for one hour per day after work for the next two weeks. After they believe they had exhausted all reasonable suggestions a subgroup might be appointed or elected to research company records to determine which if any of the group's suggestions had already been tried. This subgroup might then make its findings known in an after work session to the larger room. The larger group might then establish further meeting times to discuss and revise the suggestions they had originally had which had not been already tested by the company. Finally, a comprehensive typewritten report of the group's suggestions, along with the research, and possible pilot studies then be submitted to the director.

2. Situation 2 exemplifies group formulation of the goals. It also may be either long or short range, as in case one.
3. The third situation is an example of subgroup or clique within the larger group formulating the group's goals through mild coercion. This appears to be a short range goal.

COHESIVENESS

Cohesiveness might best be described as the glue holding a group together. It is the sense of we-ness--the shared feeling of togetherness, or solidarity among the group members. Cohesiveness is necessary for any group to function reliably and effectively.

A group tends to be more highly cohesive: (1) the more homogeneous the members' attitudes and beliefs are, (2) the more the group members interact (communicate) with one another, (3) the smaller the size of the group, (4) the greater the perceived exclusiveness of the group, and (5) the more homogeneous are individual member's goals. In essence, the cohesiveness of the group depends upon the similarities (actual or perceived) of the members' desires to accomplish a common goal and their idiosyncratic motivational levels while functioning as group members.

To further illustrate the difference between groups high and low in cohesion consider the following examples:

High Cohesiveness Situation 1: Five college students, all from rural backgrounds, have formed a group to lobby for legislation mandating industrial clean air and water standards. Each member strongly believes that the federal government is the agency which must accept responsibility to insure the clean air and water standards. The group meets informally at least three times per week to discuss governmental involvement and pending legislation. All five members are ecology majors and plan to work with the Department of the Interior or Department of Natural Resources to further effect their beliefs.

Low Cohesion Situation 2: Eighty persons ranging in age from fifteen to eighty-six have formed a group to educate its members in vegetable gardening techniques. The group meets once every two months for two hours to view a film and to hear a guest lecturer. Members are distributed widely throughout a large urban area and rarely have or take the opportunity to interact except at meetings. Attendance at the meetings generally averages about 50%.

FACILITATING COHESIVENESS IN AN ESTABLISHED GROUP

Factors which increase cohesiveness in functioning groups have been detailed by numerous researchers (Seashore, 1954; Heider, 1958; Ross and Zander, 1957). Eight basic conditions which have been demonstrated to promote cohesiveness include:

1. Shared beliefs and attitudes among the group members. Consensus regarding purpose and goals.
2. Shared security needs of group members.
3. Feelings of positiveness toward the group.
4. The degree to which the group is valued by other groups.
5. The exclusiveness of the group.
6. Smallness of size of the group.
7. Communication among members, that is open, two-way interaction.
8. Focus on common threat.

The group leader has the responsibility of helping to build a foundation which will promote cohesion within the group. This is probably the most difficult task with which the leader is confronted. Promoting cohesiveness within the group may well be a greater challenge than actually solving a large part of the group's stated problem.

Everyday life confronts us with examples of the above. Consider the civic club president who is unable to sufficiently motivate group members to work towards achieving the stated group goal. It is not unusual to see such a leader performing the entire group function alone or with the help of a few others. It is the lack of cohesiveness, in this instance, which caused the group members to fail to participate and forced the group leader to function independently of the group.

Group Limits

Any group, regardless of the style of leadership, the climate, the composition of the members, or a combination of all has limits imposed upon it from sources external to the group. The limiting factors include the environment in which the group must function and the social system in which the group exists, in essence, reality.

The group also must contend with the limits imposed by the members within the group. The limits established from within the group are in effect the group norm. Bonney (1974) has defined the group norm as "the limits of allowable behaviors of individual members of the group which also includes variable rewards and punishments when the behavior exceeds the allowable limits."

The group leader is in a position which normally allows her/him to establish or develop further group limits. An example of this type of limiting occurs when the leader decides, before the group is formed, what its climate should become. That is, the leader may realize a personal preference for functioning in a democratic environment and may so structure the group. Or, the leader may choose to develop an autocratic or laissez-faire atmosphere depending, upon a desired outcome, the personalities of the group members, the length of time the group has to function, and a variety of other variables which the leader considers relevant. It should be apparent at this point that the leader has many value decisions to make, all of which affect the entire group membership.

When a group is first formulated, or before if possible, the leader must consider:

1. The possible or probable goals which the group members may formulate. If the goals are externally imposed or if the leader is to determine the goals this condition can be considered before the group

is actually created. If the group is to set its own goals then the leader must wait until after the goals have been developed before fully determining in what ways and under what conditions the goals might best be met.

2. The group atmosphere/leader style. In this instance the leader is obliged not only to consider the group goals (as in #1 above) but must also take into account the personalities (if known) of the various group members and the leader's preference for a particular leadership style. The leader must then determine if she/he can provide the type of leadership (climate) necessary for the group members to achieve the desired goals. If the leader is unable to provide the necessary climate, a new leader, or a co-leader, comfortable in functioning in a different climate should be employed. The new leader or co-leader may be a member of the group.

3. (a) The environmental (physical) determinants. These are the external limiting factors under which the group must operate. The group leader will do well to consider in advance things such as the physical comfort of the group. Are there sufficient tables, chairs, etc. so that everyone may work comfortably? Do group members have all the material needed to function effectively and fully? Are audio-visual materials in good working order and can the presentation be seen and heard by all without strain? In general, environmental determinants should be accounted for and prepared for well ahead of time whenever possible.

(b) The social system of the community. The group leader must determine if the group activities and goals are congruent with the prevailing social mores, attitudes, beliefs, etc. of the community in

which the group is being conducted. Are the activities appropriate for members of all ages? Should the activities be presented only with an older or younger group?

4. The group norms. In this respect the leader must consider if standards of allowable behaviors exist, and if so what the standards are. A leader who violates the larger group norm in a negative manner will incur resistance from members of the group or possibly expulsion/exclusion from the group depending upon the severity of the violation. In this matter consider the new, young religious leader invited to lead a mission in Central America. Suppose the young man was intelligent and perceptive but that he failed to realize the parishoner's belief that any form of birth control was taboo. Further, suppose that at one of the first few group meetings the leader delivered his sermon on the necessity of birth control. In this instance the leader by his violation of the group norm (espousing birth control practices) would probably, at the very least, incur resistance, or at worst, be excluded from further group participation.

Now that we have considered many of the dynamics present across groups let us turn to some of the more specific leader behaviors which have been effective in formulating groups, establishing ground rules, facilitating the general discussion and helping to keep the group on task.

FORMULATING THE GROUP

The group leader is generally less actively involved with this process than with all others which follow. However, it is important for a group leader to consider the origin of the group if the leader's potential is to be maximized. A spontaneous group (type I) may form when a number of potential members communicate and realize the common-

ality of their interests, beliefs and attitudes. The potential members also realize that they share a common need which can be best be satisfied through group membership.

Another type of group (type II) may be formed when a person in a position of authority or power designates persons of lesser power to work together to accomplish some goal. The goal in this case is determined by the authority figure. In this case the goals may be to help the power figure make some decision, acquire information, gain understanding and/or perhaps just to feel better. In this situation the power figure chooses to function as a part of the group. This person may or may not choose to function as the group's leader; however, as an example of this case consider the President of the United States and his cabinet members. The President (authority or power figure) designates the cabinet members (usually persons of less power) to help him accomplish some goal (balance budget, insure defense of country, etc.). The President is undoubtedly a part of the group and he may or may not elect to function as the group leader.

A third way (type III) in which groups are formed involves a person in an authority position mandating that subordinates function together to accomplish a goal set by the authority figure. In this case, however, the power figure is not a working member of the group. This principle is illustrated when the President of the United States appoints a commission of scientists to study the effects of supersonic travel on the earth's atmosphere, or, in the schools, when a superintendent appoints a group of principals to determine methods of equalizing teacher workloads among their various schools.

In general it can be stated that individuals function in groups to satisfy intrinsic (primary) and/or extrinsic (secondary) needs. When

a person functions in a group to achieve a personal goal or to satisfy a personal need we may assume that the person is operating at an intrinsic level. When the person functions in the group to satisfy someone else or to gain something other than one's own satisfaction then one is extremely motivated. A third condition may be said to exist when a person functioning in a group simultaneously satisfied both the intrinsic and the extrinsic need states. This state may be illustrated by the teacher who remains after school each day to coach a football team. The teacher may be satisfying personal needs (intrinsic) relative to perceived status, being associated with a winning team, being a leader, etc. Further, this person may be compensated monetarily or considered for a promotion thereby satisfying an extrinsic need (money, possible assistant principalship, etc.) through participation with the football team.

Establishing Ground Rules:

Once a group has been conceived (or actually formed) some basic decisions must be made concerning the desired outcomes for the participants. These decisions will undoubtedly be value oriented and will necessarily involve from one person to the entire group membership. That is, someone or some collection of persons must decide in what manner (through what activities) the group goals can best be achieved.

In the spontaneous group (type I) situation, Bonney (1974) has indicated that the group must necessarily experience certain developmental epochs if it is to become fully functioning. Bonney states that the group operates at first at an establishment stage in which the group members attempt "to achieve a functional interaction...that will allow for personal growth." This stage is further divided by Bonney into two substages of exploration and socialization. In the exploratory and socialization stages each member of the group tries to estimate how he/she

is received by the others and how to expect other group members to behave. The leader is tested in terms of his competence. The form in which the exploration occurs will depend on the kind of people involved, their ways of relating (to others) in groups, the behavior of the counselor (leader) and the setting.

Before the socialization and exploration stage begins, however, it is desirable for the leader (or an informed group member) to briefly summarize: (1) the purpose of the group, (2) the physical and social reality (conditions) under which the group must operate, (3) and generally the appropriate, or an appropriate method of participant interaction. In summarizing the purpose of the group it is stressed that the group goals need not be espoused. In actuality, the specific long and short range goals will not yet have been established. When the physical and social contingencies under which the group must function are defined, it should be brief and in the narrowest sense possible. This is done in an effort to keep the group members unbiased relative to their individual perceptions of the "real" environment. At a later point in time the members will usually discuss openly the realities operating on the group. A group decision will then be made concerning this reality and how members are to function within it (parameters of allowable behaviors are defined based on the group's reality perception). The appropriate method(s) of interaction among group members should be broadly defined so as not to unnecessarily restrict, inhibit, or limit members from expressing affect. The most general guide in setting the ground rule for appropriate modes of member interaction is to ask whether or not a member's behavior (verbal, physical) contributes to the growth of the members in the group, is within the limits of allowable behaviors for the society in which the group functions and is related to the purpose and goals of the group. If the answer is yes, then the group behavior

is appropriate.

In the Type II group (formed by an authority figure in which member participation is mandatory rather than voluntary) the establishment of ground rules proceeds much in the same way as above with the exception that the authority figure is free to step in at any time to determine the group's purpose and/or goals. Further the authority figure may dictate the group's reality and the method of interaction.

In the Type III situation the ground rules relative to the purpose and goals of the group as a whole are set by the authority or power figure during or before the establishment stage. The group's reality and mode of member interaction however, is usually left to the discretion of the group members. In this situation (type III), the authority figure is usually interested only in the end product of the group—that is, whether or not the group met the identified need relative to the purpose and/or goals which were defined for the group. In this case the members' personal growth, needs, etc. are not of primary importance.

FACILITATING THE GENERAL DISCUSSION/THE LEADER AS FACILITATOR

The process of facilitating, in its most basic form, simply means making it easier or more pleasurable for the group members to interact, either verbally or non-verbally. A high degree of facilitation is most often achieved when certain leader and group properties, described below, are present in the functioning group.

Reduction of Anxiety or Threat

A group functions best with a minimal level of anxiety in relation to the purpose and process of the group. Most of us tend to react with some degree of apprehension to unexpected, novel or ambiguous situations.

We can only respond to any interpersonal situation according to perceptions and response sets we have formed from past experiences. Students typically expect school situations to be fairly well structured. If the expectation is ignored or violated, the likely result will be confusion, hostility or inaction. A simple acceptance of the uncertainty felt by the participants as normal will in itself relieve much of the anxiety associated with it. Further help may be given early in the group by exploring with group members the ways in which this group will be similar to groups they have experienced before and ways in which it may become unique. A similar sort of anxiety may also be experienced by the leader.

Democratic Leadership Style

The research has repeatedly shown that members more freely constructively communicate when the group leader functions in a democratic manner. (See role behaviors for leader pages 5 through 7). Lippitt and White (1943) in their classic study have shown that under democratic leadership originality and spontaneity exist at a high level. Tension-hostility appears to be present at a very low level-especially when compared to other forms of leadership. This suggests that, when practical, the leader should strive to develop a democratic atmosphere within the group.

Environmental Engineering

This term refers to the preplanning involved to insure the safety (psychological and physical) and comfort of the group members. In its simplest form it might mean that the leader arranges a quiet, tastefully furnished meeting place for the group. More elaborate schemes might prove necessary as the group progresses through different activities such

role playing, sociodrama, psychodrama, etc.

Cohesiveness Stressed

The leader should attempt to promote and maintain the highest level of cohesiveness possible during the life of the group. (See cohesiveness, page 14). In this respect certain leader roles are mandated. Those roles which serve to clarify and increase the members understanding of one another should be undertaken frequently by the leader.

Ground Rules Established by the Group as a Whole

When each member of the group has input into how the group should function then each member becomes personally committed to abide by the group's rules and to help achieve the group goal. In this same manner the group members may determine how deeply they will become emotionally involved with the group and what types of experiences are appropriate for members to share with the group. This consensus relative to the level of sharing serves to help keep all group members operating with like amounts of emotional involvement. Threat may be kept to a minimum as ground rules are established which forbid discussing the group activities with persons outside the group.

Establishing Time Contingencies

This is the process whereby the leader designates definite segments of time by which a certain task or goal is to be accomplished. The group members are thus forced to interact cooperatively if the task is to be completed in the time allowed. The leader must be cautious however to insure that sufficient time is allotted for the successful completion of the tasks. This suggests that the time contingencies should be somewhat flexible and capable of being varied at the discretion

of the leader. As the leader and group gain experience functioning together the leader will be better able to set realistic time contingencies.

Difficult Group Members

Passive-resister-engages in "out of field" behavior, stares out the windows, makes irrelevant remarks, etc. If the group is cohesive, the group itself will probably pressure him/her into constructive involvement or at least neutralize the person's destructive potential. If possible, assign him/her to a project with a partner who is active and well accepted by the other members. The passive resister may eventually force you to remove him/her from this group.

High status in the larger group based on referent power- This person may be able to exert more influence over the group members than the leader. Examples include the leader of a delinquent gang, an exceptionally bright student, or a star athlete. The leader should attempt to elicit this member's cooperation rather than compete with him/her.

High status in the larger group based on legitimate or assigned power-A principal or superintendant of a school as a member, but not the presumed leader, of a group of school teachers and counselors. Other groups members may defer to this individual even though his/her comments may not be especially relevant or goal directed. In this situation the group leader would do well to develop an understanding with the administrator before the first meeting of the group. At some point a diplomatic confrontation might be necessary. The administrator should be helped to understand the importance of cooperative effort and mutual respect among all members of the group. It may be necessary to remind the administrator (and other members also) of the group goals.

A comment recognizing the unique responsibilities and duties of the administrator may give the leader sufficient credibility to suggest that the group return to a task orientation (in light of the realities and restrictions posed by the high status person).

There are several other types of behavior which the leader should be alert to such as the clown, the deviant, the monopolizer, and a few others. The one the leader must do something about without exception, however, is the blocker.

The Blocker-Many groups and especially those groups which have involuntary participants, experience members who behave in such a manner so as to block the group from achieving a stated objective or goal. In the case of a very young group (recently established) or a group low in cohesiveness it is doubtful that any member will confront a blocker due to the fear of breaking of the group. In this case it is necessary for the group leader to minimize the negative effects of the blocker on the group until the group either becomes more cohesive and/or matures. In dealing with the blocker the leader need not become involved in direct confrontation. In fact, confrontation is usually best avoided, at least until the group becomes sufficiently comfortable functioning together to handle a major internal disorder. The leader can serve to minimize the blocker's effects by:

(1) systematically ignoring the blocker, or (2) by delaying or postponing the blocker's verbal notions. Examples of these situations are illustrated below:

Situation 1: Leader: Does anyone have any suggestions as to what we can do to help Johnny?

ignoring Blocker: Johnny doesn't need any help..

Leader: (ignoring blocker): Mike, it looked as if you were about to suggest something, or

Leader: (ignoring blocker): What are some things we can do to help Johnny?

Situation 2: Leader: Does anyone have any suggestions as to what we can do to help Johnny?

**Making
Blocker
Delay
Response**

Blocker: Johnny doesn't need any help.

Leader to Blocker: If you will hold off a moment until after we've come up with some suggestions, I'll let you tell me how you feel.

GROUP ACTIVITIES USED TO FACILITATE INTERACTION AND LEARNING

Role Playing

Role playing is the conscious adoption of a perceived method of behaving not normally employed by an individual for the purpose of increasing the individual's or group's understanding of the dynamics of the psychological interaction at hand. Role playing may be of either long or short duration, with thirty minutes to an hour being considered of long duration. Roles may either be assigned by the group leader to the individuals or the individuals may volunteer for a specific role. A role playing activity may involve one group member, a portion of the group, or the entire group.

Consider the following role-playing situation in which two participants, a teacher and a counselor, are asked to interact. This could be any two or more members of the group who appears to be in conflict, thereby obstructing the progress of the group. Teacher Role - the teacher feels strongly that the school should take a more active part in telling students what they ought to do with their lives. Obviously they are not mature enough or experienced enough to make these decisions by themselves. Counselor Role - The counselor feels just as strongly that the students should be encouraged to make their

own decisions without advice or direct influence from others even when requested. The counselors' typical response to students is "how do you feel about this?"

The two people playing the roles then discuss their opposing views with an effort to reach some sort of understanding.

Role-reversal - After participants have interacted, it may be helpful to have the same participants switch roles and then role play the activity again. In this manner the participants may gain insight into the problems and needs of persons different in some way from themselves.

Socio-drama - This is an acting out of a problem area common and significant to all members of the group. If the group is large enough, it is best to have part of the group put on the drama while the rest observe and take notes. The participants may play themselves or be assigned typical roles such as initiator, blocker, etc. A discussion should always follow the drama.

Sub-grouping

This technique of breaking down the whole group into smaller logical components has been demonstrated to be effective under a number of different circumstances. In one situation, the leader may wish to divide the whole group into sub-groups for the purpose of task completion. In this situation, the leader may give general directions to the large group and specific directions while circulating among the various task groups. Or the leader may give specific instructions to the entire group and serve as a member of the functioning task group.

In a second situation the leader may use sub-grouping in an effort to match the personalities of individual members to achieve maximum interaction. In this situation the leader might elect to group three

or four of the more non-verbal members with a fifth member who is only slightly more outspoken. In this instance the sub-group goal might be to encourage more individual participation by the non-verbal members. By eliminating the dominating or more vocal members, the less verbal members are encouraged to participate.

A third main application of sub-grouping is to allow the group leader time to deal individually with a member of the group. In this context either a co-leader is designated or the group is left to determine its own leader. This third situation is often employed by successful teachers and counselors in task and guidance groups in the school setting.

Summarization

The technique of summarizing may be effectively employed by the group leader (or any group member) to facilitate remembering, to refocus the group members' attention, or to terminate an activity or session.

As a remembering technique the leader or other group member briefly describes the main points which were developed during the group session. The leader then asks the group if any of the significant topics of areas of interest covered during the session have not been mentioned. By asking the group if all topics have been covered, the members are forced to remember as best they can what actually occurred in the session.

As a technique for refocusing attention, the leader may summarize the stated group purpose, goal, objective, or specific activity or task. In this matter the group members are reminded of the group's original purpose, etc. which serves to put the group back on task. The leader in this case is actually functioning as a clarifier of information and evaluator.

Summarization as a technique for termination offers the leader an effective way to end a focus of discussion, restate what was said, and then move to another topic or dismiss the group if the time for the session is complete. This final summarization has the effect of helping the members reflect upon what occurred during the session, but no time is allowed for feedback from group members. By summarizing without feedback a sense of closure is encouraged which allows the members to leave the session feeling good about having successfully completed at least a part of the group task.

SUMMARY

Ask yourself the following questions shortly after the group has begun. Periodically ask the questions as the group matures.

1. What type of atmosphere exists?
2. What type of leadership style is present?
3. Am I demonstrating the qualities of a good leader?
4. What roles have the various members adopted?
5. Are the roles constructive? Are the roles compatible with the group goals?
6. What are the group goals? What is the purpose of the group? Do all members recognize the purpose and goals?
7. Is the group cohesive? What am I doing to increase cohesion?
8. What are some of the factors which limit the group?
9. How am I dealing with difficult members?
10. Should I make a major alteration in my approach? What?

Handling Silence

Occasionally the leader will ask a question of the group and will be met with a deafening silence. This is most discouraging not only to the leader but also to the participants, for interest in the group and/or the ability of group members to solve the group's problem is questioned. When a leader asks a general question and is met with the period of silence it usually indicates one of two main conditions:

1. The question is considered rhetorical by the group members and they are waiting for the group leader to continue with the "lecture." This is an indication that the leader may be overly directive and active thereby denying the members an opportunity to effectively participate. The members may have the feeling "What's the use?" or "It's just what he wants to hear."

2. Lack of understanding relative to the expected behavior on the part of the participants also leads to periods of silence. In this case, the participants may not be "following" the discussion because it is "over their heads", irrelevant to them, or just plain boring. As a leader, one may wish to check on the source (cause) of the silence by asking random members to state in their own words what has transpired in the group and what the group's goals are. If the members can do this accurately then the leader must assume that the silence is due either to irrelevancy or general boredom. The leader must then strive to actively involve all participants. This might take the form of an experiential exercise among participants which is later processed and integrated into the group framework. The key here is that all members should have an active role in the experience.

The leader should realize that boredom can develop in any group. It is a natural phenomenon when people are asked to be inactive physically

for long periods of time to become less attention and eventually disassociated. Again, activity is the key in that it breaks the routine, leading to boredom.

Building Personal Credibility

• As a group leader it is especially important to project effectively an adherence to the norms and values of the group to which one belongs. It communicates to other group members a willingness to publically acknowledge that in which one believes. It further communicates the leader's assertion of rights as a productive human being.

The level of one's own personal credibility in general is a function of one's 1) consistency and 2) personal potency. By consistency reference is made to the predictability of one's rational behavior patterns. That is, will the person respond (behave) in the same way when presented with the same situation at another time? Can I count on this person to do as he has done in the past? The past level of consistency which a person has demonstrated may either augment or detract from one's level of credibility. A second aspect of one's credibility involves the idiosyncratic nature of the person--the personal effectiveness (potency) of the individual. One's personal effectiveness is dependent upon the extent of one's 1) knowledge base, 2) knowledge of human nature and 3) the ability to effectively interact with others. It is easily seen that for one to function with a high degree of credibility there must be a dynamic interplay between the necessary conditions of consistency and potency with both conditions being developed to a high level.

The Last Word

Leading a group of people through a series of well planned activities can be a very rewarding and productive experience--for the leader as well as the participants. The challenge of leading groups is great whether you are preparing to lead a series of staff development sessions for your peers in the area of career guidance or to lead a series of experiential activities for student groups. We trust that this overview of basic group dynamics and group procedures will help you meet the challenge of group leadership.

As a final exercise you may wish to develop a short practical summary of this handbook by seeking answers to the following questions:

How can a leader respond to group silence?

How can a leader handle a blocker?

How can you maintain task orientation or group focus?

How can you as a leader build your credibility?

What kind of leadership style do you prefer?

How can you work with authority figures?

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