GROUP MODERATION

FUNCTIONAL & DYSFUNCTIONAL ROLES IN A GROUP

INTRODUCTION
> *These notes may help you - group moderators - to teach your participants how to improve the quality of their group interactions and sharing.*
> *From time to time, you may use the hints suggested   here below, as an effective check list for the individual members of your group and also for the entire group.*

Role Functions in a Group

Functional roles   are all those actions and behavior of the group members that serve the needs of the group**.**

Dysfunctional roles, on the contrary are**,** those actions and behavior of the group members that tend to make the group inefficient or weak.

For functional, efficient and productive group interaction two items have to be kept in mind

A)   **TASK NEEDS**   - **An agenda**. - **The Items** on which the group members will work on to achieve the task of the group

B)   **SUPPORT NEEDS** - **The way the members** of the group need behave and perform in order to efficiently accomplish the task of the group.

TASK ROLES

Agenda - Items to work on in the Group

1. Initiating Activity :

- Proposing solutions, suggesting new ideas, new definition of the problem, new organization of material or new approaches on the problem.

2. Offering Information :

- Offering   suggestions, sharing additional facts and information.

3. Seeking Opinion :

- Looking for an expression of feeling from members. Seeking and asking for clarification on values and ideas.

4. Sharing Authoritative Knowledge

- Offering facts or generalizations which are "authoritative", relating to the group problems to illustrate a point.

5. Giving Opinions :

- Stating an opinion or belief concerning a suggestion, particularly concerning its value rather than its factual basis.

6. Elaborating :

- Clarifying, giving examples or developing meanings, trying to envision how a proposal might work if adopted.

7. Coordinating :

- Showing relationships between various ideas and suggestions, trying to pull ideas or suggestions together, trying to draw together activities of various sub-groups or members.

8. Summarizing :

- Pooling together related ideas or suggestions, re-stating suggestions after group has discussed them.

SUPPORT ROLES

Group members attitudes and behaviour

FUNCTIONAL ROLES

1. Encouraging

- Being warm, friendly, and responsive to others, praising others and their ideas, agreeing with and accepting contributions of others.

2. Diagnosing

- Determining sources of difficulty, appropriate steps to be taken, Analyzing main blocks to progress.

3. **Testing for consensus**

    - Tentatively asking for group opinions in order to find out whether the group is nearing consensus, sending up trial balloons to test group opinions.

4. **Mediating**

    - Harmonizing, conciliating differences points of view, suggesting compromise solutions.

5. **Relieving tension**

    - Draining of negative feeling by jesting or pouring oil on troubled waters, putting tense situations in a wider context.

DYS- FUNCTIONAL ROLES.

1. **Being aggressive**

    - Working for status by criticizing or blaming others, showing hostility against group or individuals, deflating status or ego of others.

2. **Blocking**

    - Negativistic, being stubbornly and unreasonably resistant, interfering slowing the progress of the group by going off on tangent, arguing too much on a point, trying to bring back issues which the group intentionally rejected or by-passed.

3. **Recognition-seeking**

    - Trying to call attention to self, boasting, reporting on personal achievements, using group as sounding board, trying not to be placed in an "inferior' position.

4. **Dominating**

    - Asserting authority by manipulating the group, giving directions authoritatively, interrupting others, flattering, asserting superior status or right to attention.

5. **Competing**

    - Vying with others to produce best ideas, talk the most, play the most roles, gain favor with leadership.

6. **Withdrawal**

- Acting indifferent or passive, excessive formality, maintaining distance from others, insulated from action, daydreaming, doodling, whispering to others, wandering from subject, passive resister.

7. Horsing around

- Clowning, joking, and disrupting work of the group.

8. Seeking sympathy

- Trying to induce group members to be sympathetic to one's problems, disparaging one's ideas to gain support.

N.B.: *Don't 'blame' nonfunctional behavior in self or in others; rather see It as a symptom of the group's inability to satisfy individual needs through group centered activity.*
Also, what might appear a block to one might seem positive to another. Hence what appears as non- functional might not really be so, since content and group conditions must be considered.

IMPROVING GROUP ROLES

A group is strong and works more efficiently if

a)   Its members become sensitive to and aware of how much they meet the needs of their group   members through what they do.

b)   Its members become conscious of the role functions needed at any given time.

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