Group Stages –Reducing Group Uncertainty or Conflict and Promoting Group Success

Stage	The facilitator can reduce uncertainty in each stage by:	How can a facilitator do that?
Forming	• Explaining the purpose of the group and its goals. • Providing time for questions. • Allowing time for members to become acquainted. • Modeling expected behaviors.	• *Warm-up exercise* • *Establish ground rules* • *Provide an agenda* • *Conduct an icebreaker* • *Clarify roles*
Storming	• Hearing all points of view. • Acknowledging conflict as an opportunity for improvement. • Adhering to core values, such as truth, trust and respect. • Maintaining democratic and humanistic ideals.	• *Stay calm and neutral* • *Invite input and feedback* • *Admit conflict and intervene when necessary* • *Encourage communication*
Norming	• Modeling listening skills • Fostering an atmosphere of trust. • Teaching and facilitating consensus. • Providing team-centered learning.	• *Help solve problems* • *Encourage feedback* • *Provide necessary training* • *Share power with group members* • *Coach and counsel.*
Performing	• Being prepared for temporary setbacks. • Focusing on the task accomplishments and interpersonal support. • Providing feedback on the work of the group. • Promoting and representing the group.	• *Rotate duties* • *Offer your expertise* • *Help team celebrate success* • *Build agendas together* • *Act as a resource*

Stage	The facilitator can reduce uncertainty in each stage by:	How can a facilitator do that?
Transforming	• Having an icebreaker to get people to learn about each other. • Affirming that what is going on within the group is ok. • Recapping where the group is and where they are going. • Summarizing current situations. • Brainstorming to bring in new ideas. • Including newcomers or new ideas.	• *Warm-up exercise* • *Create common goal* • *Encourage participation* • *Clarify roles* • *Provide support*

Task Roles

Task Roles	Characteristic	Why helps the group	Why hinders the group	Facilitator: How to control
Initiator	Starts things off; or helps change direction. Initially often the leader.	*Takes responsibility; sets the ground work.*	*Stifles some people; could go in wrong direction.*	*Includes the group; monitors direction; gets group consensus*
Clarifier	Takes individual contributions and clarifies them. Encourages people to be specific.	*Keeps on point and on track.*	*Annoying; gets caught up in the details.*	*Rephrases so not to put others off; ensures original intent is still there.*
Information Giver	Gives or volunteers certain information. Seeks clarification of suggestions based on facts relevant to the problem.	*Informative; factual base. Keeps group on right track.*	*Annoying; may give wrong information. Not the SME. Can shut down the group.*	*Ensures information is accurate. Includes SME.*
Questioner	Asks fundamental questions about the task. Has the ability to step back from the task and challenge assumptions.	*Prevents Group Think; plays Devil's Advocate; steps back and looks at whole; visionary.*	*May be too wide ranging; gets group off the topic. Slows things down.*	*Keeps on task. Monitors questions. Makes sure all participate.*
Summarizer	Reevaluates the situation and summarizes the group's thoughts and end product. Provides breathing space.	*Provides clarity and check and balance.*	*Opinion of one; may miss something; Shuts down other creative thoughts.*	*Controls the summary; reminds group they may not be there yet. Encourages further discussion.*
Opinion Giver	States belief about alternative suggestions. Focuses on values rather than facts.	*Can be productive and factual.*	*May not be factual; based on personal experience; Shuts down others.*	*Redirects to get others' opinions.*

Maintenance Roles

Maintenance Roles	Characteristic	Why helps the group	Why hinders the group	Facilitator: How to control
Encourager	Praises good points, exhibits acceptance and group solidarity.	*Brings group together, validates team work.*	*May feel good too soon; sometimes conflict is necessary.*	*Encourages group participation; validates and gets others' opinions*
Harmonizer	Attempts to mediate differences among members or their points of view and seeks to reconcile differences. Reduces conflict and tension.	*Provides positive atmosphere of team. Can reduce tension and calm tense situations.*	*Sometimes conflict is necessary for group to move forward.*	*Reminds group that it is ok to disagree; validates all opinions.*
Supporter	Provides warmth for individuals by agreeing with their ideas. Provides non-verbal support.	*Validates others. Encourages participation*	*May validate the wrong idea, response, person, etc.*	*Validates person; Still needs to redirect the wrong information.*
Gatekeeper	Keeps communication open, suggests ways to share information with others.	*Can keep the group on task and keeps them focused. Protects conversation monopoly.*	*Stops others from joining the discussion or stifling others.*	*Gives permission for more discussion. Takes back control. Re-asserts authority.*
Compromiser	Is willing to compromise or yield personal viewpoints, or admit an error.	*Doesn't fight; leads by ex-ample. Allows others to do the same.*	*Can cause others to feel that they must compromise as well.*	*Does a check and makes sure others are true to their own beliefs.*
Observer	Keeps records of the group processes. Brings data into the discussion as is seen pertinent.	*Speaks out if something is worth noting. Sees big picture. Sees more than the spoken word.*	*Waiting to bring in own agenda.*	*Realizes that every person has his/her own agenda; Is aware if person is being honest or not.*

Effects of Group Size

Groups come in all shapes and sizes! Will the size of the group effect how you facilitate? Absolutely!

Dyad — Two members of the group or a group of simply two people.

Advantages:
Sharing; trust building; greater opportunity to give input and exchange ideas; get to better know each other

Disadvantages:
Can get off track easily; limited perspective

Facilitation Techniques
- Keep it intimate and personal.
- Allow more freedom with timeframes.
- Group can be more autonomous.

Facilitation Challenges
- Don't become a part of the group.
- Be careful not to let the pair go off track.
- Personality challenges are more evident in dyads.

Triad — Three members of the group or a group of three.

Advantages:
Sharing, trust building greater opportunity to give input; more opportunity to talk and to get to know each other

Disadvantages:
Can get off track easily; limited perspective; strong personality could dominate

Facilitation Techniques
- Keep it intimate and personal.
- Appoint one of the group members as timekeeper.

Facilitation Challenges
- Be careful that one group member doesn't become the "leader".
- Personality challenges increase, as the size of the group increases.
- Quiet members of the group find it more difficult to "hide".

Small Group of 3-5

Advantages:
Sharing; trust building; greater opportunity to give input; more opportunity to talk and get to know each other

Disadvantages:
Loses some of the personal one-on-one; strong personality could dominate

Facilitation Techniques
- Establish group norms up front.
- Ensure all members of the group to understand the 'end result'.
- Keep the group geographically close (seated together).

Facilitation Challenges
- Possibility of defined group roles and greater personality/behavior challenges.
- Group stages become more evident.

Medium Group of 6-15

Advantages:
Individual diversity; variety of opinions and roles

Disadvantages:
Smaller groups will form in the larger group; lose ability to bond/connect; easier for some not to participate

Facilitation Techniques
- "Work the crowd" and cover the entire spectrum of the workgroup.
- Allow the group to bond/build the team.
- Add humor and activities to keep group members positive.

Facilitation Challenges
- Personality/behavior challenges will be the most evident in this sized group.
- Easier for the frustrated or challenged member of the group to 'give up'.

Large Group of 15 or more

Advantages:
Want to transfer information; clarify something by answering questions and getting instant feedback

Disadvantages:
Participants have less opportunity to speak; not all opinions can be heard; time is severely limited

Facilitation Techniques
- Visual aids are a must!
- The proper equipment (slides, lavaliere, microphone, etc.) is essential.
- Keep the group on track and on time!

Facilitation Challenges
- Keeping them interested will be a challenge.
- Involving the entire group is essential.
- Keeping challenging personalities in check is important.

Can you think of additional techniques and/or challenges that we can add?