Stages of Group Development

Forming – the initial stage of group development during which people come to feel valued and accepted so that they identify with the group
- Any real disagreements between people remain unacknowledged as members strive to be seen as flexible
- If the group has formally appointed group leaders, group members depend on them for clues as to how they should behave

Storming – the stage of group development during which the group clarifies its goals and determines the roles each member will have in the group power structure
- Members are concerned about expressing their ideas and opinions and finding their place
- The over politeness exhibited during forming may be replaced and cliques and coalitions may be formed instead
- When a group does not storm, it may experience groupthink
- To avoid groupthink, constructive disagreement should be encouraged

Norming – stage of group development during which the group solidifies its rules for behavior, especially those that relate to how conflict will be managed
- During this phase, the norms or standards of the group become clear, and members who do not comply with norms are sanctioned

Performing – the stage of group development when the skills, knowledge, and abilities of all members are combined to overcome obstacles and meet goals successfully
- Conversations are focused on problem solving and sharing task-related information
- Performing is the most important stage of group development

Adjourning – the stage of group development in which members assign meaning to what they have done and determine how to end or maintain interpersonal relations they have developed
- Two challenges are faced during this phase: groups need to construct meaning from their shared experience by evaluating and reflecting on the experience and members will need to find ways to sever or maintain interpersonal relationships that have developed during the group’s life together

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