

COMMON DYNAMICS AT THE PREAFFILIATION STAGE

(Ragg, 2010, Garvin, 2011-2012)

Process Category	Group Dynamic	Typical Findings at this Stage
STRUCTURAL	Decision Making	Members expect the leader to take control and make decisions. They are not prepared because of past experiences. We need to start soliciting input so the group is experienced as qualitatively different.
	Role Structures	Members bring in the roles that they use in the other areas of their lives. They rely on these roles everywhere they go. Many won't work well in group so we start to promote healthy and socially useful roles.
	Control Mechanisms	Members expect the leader to be the source of control as the only authority figure. They treat us like a teacher or other authority. They aren't ready to employ self-control or use relational power at this point. If we do well on input this will change in subsequent stages.
	Boundaries	Members are not sure that they want to be in the group at this point. There are no boundaries because they are more identified with out-of-group life and relationships.
	Leadership	Members are not ready to assume leadership at this point. Some might produce indigenous leadership by challenging aspects of the group or putting out ideas. Encourage this providing there is no risk for deviant roles to develop.
INTERPERSONAL	Norms	Norms begin setting right away. Whatever we do in the first sessions will become normative so we must be very careful and wise about how we respond and structure the first sessions.
	Patterns of Affiliation	If some members know each other they will cling together. Most will know you. Others will search for similarities and seek them out. Interaction will often be limited to these comfortable relationships. Other than these dynamics members are seeking affiliation so we need to make it happen among the members.
	Atmosphere	Members are tense and nervous about what might happen. Everything will seem tentative at this time with people not wanting to risk and withholding.
	Tension Management	There are no systems in place so we must watch the atmosphere and intervene if people seem uncomfortable. Some members may assume work or resistance roles. Monitor for role lock and historical roles.
	Cohesion	There is no cohesion at this point. People are not committed to the group and have no investment in the group relationships. If anything, they are looking for reasons not to return.