

SWRK 409
SOCIAL WORK WITH GROUPS
(Ragg, 2010, Garvin, 2011-2013)

GROP ROLE DEFINITIONS

ROLES THAT PROMOTE TASK ACCOMPLISHMENT

Diagnoser	At least one member must be able to look at problems, issues and group goals, figure out the sources of the problems, and state what the problem seems to be.
Initiator	At least one member must work to define group tasks/goals and suggest ideas or tasks appropriate for making progress toward the group goals.
Accepter	At least one other member must pick up on ideas initiated so the rest of the group can be lead into further discussion or development of an action plan.
Information Seeker	During group discussions it is important for at least one member to ask others to contribute their information/opinions to the group discussion.
Information Giver	At least one member is needed to contribute opinions, suggestions and ideas during the group discussion.
Clarifier	At least one member needs to be aware of confusion or potential in the discussion so terms can be defined and details spelled out.
Energizer	When group energy is low and people tend to digress, a member is needed to stimulate continued work or higher quality of work from the group membership.
Coordinator	During discussions the group often needs a member to show the relationships among ideas and activities of various member and pull them together around central themes.
Consensus Tester	A member needs to test whether or not the group is nearing a decision or conclusion by sending up trial balloons to test whether all agree or not.
Summarizer	At least one member needs to pull together ideas that have been discussed and restate the ideas so a decision of conclusion to the discussion can be achieved.
Direction Giver	When ideas and discussions require action, a member must begin to formulate the group discussions into some direction and offer to take some form of action.
Reality Tester	A member needs to examine the practicality, workability and potential unintended outcomes of group decisions and suggest alternate directions if problems might exist.
Evaluator	After a group decision has been made and implemented, a member needs to bring the focus back to the past decision to see how things turned out.

ROLES THAT MAINTAIN GROUP FUNCTIONING

Harmonizer	To help resolve differences the group needs at least one member to help analyze the nature of differences and reconcile disagreements that come from the differences.
Gate Keeper	A member is often needed to keep communication open through pulling members into discussions and suggesting procedures that permit sharing.
Encourager	A member is needed to be friendly, warm/responsive to others through facial expressions, remarks, verbal encouragement, support and acceptance of other members' input.
Compromiser	When disagreements occur among members, the group needs a member to explore the disagreement and suggest some middle ground so the disagreement can be resolved.
Standards Tester	A member often needs to test whether or not the group is satisfied with its procedures by pointing out explicit or implicit norms so they can either be ratified or changed.
Follower	At least one member is needed to go along with the movement of the group through accepting ideas and suggestions of others and acting as an audience during discussions.
Tension Reliever	When work or differences elevate the tension in the group to an unacceptable level in the group, one member is needed to suggest some change or otherwise breaking the tension through a form of distraction. This is different from a destructive role because it is not a consistent role for the member and it serves the group need as seen through all members following the lead.
Barometer	Often a member is needed to ask other members about their emotions/feelings and express their own feelings about how the group is working and how people are treating each other.
Process Observer	Groups often need at least one member to pay attention to how the group is operating and use these observations to help examine group effectiveness.
Active Listener	All groups need at least one member to serve as an interested audience for other members and be receptive to ideas.
Trust Builder	Groups often need someone to accept and support the openness of other members through risk taking, reinforcing the risk taking of others and encouraging individuality.
Mediator	Groups need someone available to promote open discussion of conflicts between group members in order to resolve conflicts and increase group togetherness.

ROLES THAT ARE DESTRUCTIVE TO GROUP OPERATIONS

Obstructor	When one member becomes negative, resistant, or continues to add issues to any group direction as a consistent position it blocks the group development and goal attainment.
Corrector	When one member continually corrects trivial details when the group is discussing an issue or attempting to make a decision it bogs the group down and hinders goal attainment.
Mistruster	When one member is constantly suspicious and defensive about the motives of others and blames others for their feelings if blocks cohesion because others cannot find a method to connect with the member nor he to them.
Attention Seeker	When one member consistently diverts attention back to themselves it blocks the participation of other members and creates feelings of resentment. This causes members to rethink their involvement in the group and promotes absenteeism.
Isolate	When one member opts out of group activities or discussions either by physically or mentally withdrawing from the group, it blocks development as there is one member who behaviourally has yet to commit to the group.
Digresser	When one member continually changes the subject/focus or moves the group away from the direction they were moving in, it hinders goal achievement as no issue is ever allowed to be resolved.
Aggressor	Attacking other individuals or sub-groups on any level (physical, psychological or verbal) destroys group cohesion and the ability of the group to muster a united focus on goal attainment.
Validation Seeker	When one member diverts attention back to continually boasting about their achievements or abilities it blocks the group development because other members cannot talk of their successes without entering a competitive exchange.
Dominator	When one member always pushes to get their own way or be the one who is right, it blocks group development and goal achievement because other members must go along or face tension escalation and argument.
Playboy	When one member constantly engages in horseplay, cynicism or disruptive joking around, the group development is disrupted because people will not risk and the goal attainment is disrupted because work cannot occur.
Lobbyist	When one member always finds a link to a personal cause (e.g., gender politics, work group) that is unrelated to the task at hand it disrupts the group's goal attainment through constantly taking the group off focus.
Clinging Vine	When one member constantly seeks sympathy or understanding through expressing depreciation of oneself in the group, it blocks development because norms develop that other members will take care of the clinging vine. It also blocks the work of the group through shifting focus back to one member's needs.

Complainer	When one member constantly complains about their situation but takes no input from the group they are stuck in a complaint mode. This interferes with goal attainment as they take no action or accept no help.
Moralizer	When one member always adapts a superior moral tone to the rest of the group it interferes with the building of cohesion because they always set themselves up as being better at least on a moral level.
Shocker	When one member constantly says things or does things that offend the other members it interferes with group development because other members close off from the shocking member.
Expert Adviser	When one member continually tells others what they should or should not do they set themselves apart from the rest of the group and inhibit cohesion.
James Dean/Gangsta	When a member presents as a very powerful anti-establishment presence they can influence the group as less powerful members begin catering to the more powerful member. This can set power structures and group norms that are harmful.

(adapted from Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Shaw, 1971; Wilson & Ryland, 1949)