



FOUNDATIONS OF PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL **1** Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics

How Groups Function

Deborah Tootle



Learning Objectives: You Will:

- Develop an understanding of how groups work.
- Learn a few tools for working effectively with groups
- Practice what you've learned





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Dynamics of Small Groups

- Tuckman proposed that small groups progress through 5 stages
 - Forming
 - Storming
 - Norming
 - Performing
 - Adjourning



Sources: Anderson, et.al., 1999. Tuckman, Bruce W. and Mary Ann Jensen, 1977.



Tuckman's Stages of Group Development

1. Forming – Getting to know each other
2. Storming – Differences emerge
3. Norming – Learn to manage conflict
4. Performing – Functioning effectively
5. Adjourning – Agreement that work is completed



Sources: Anderson, et.al., 1999. Tuckman, Bruce W. and Mary Ann Jensen, 1977.



Tuckman's Stages of Group Development

- “Ideal types” – not all groups progress in linear fashion
- Not all groups progress – can get stuck in any of stages



- Where do most groups get stuck?



Tuckman's Stages of Group Development

- Handout shows a few strategies for moving groups forward
- What are options if group can't move forward?





Tuckman's Stages of Group Development

- Handout shows a few strategies for moving groups forward
- What are options if group **can't** move forward?
 - Reconsider purpose or *readiness* of group
 - Is this a wicked problem?
 - Disband
 - More extensive facilitation process



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Facilitation

Question: What is facilitation?



Answer: Facilitation is a neutral *process*, guided by a neutral person (the facilitator), to help groups function better. Facilitators do not intervene or otherwise enter into the contents of the group's discussion

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation

Question: What is a facilitator?

Answer: A facilitator is a *content-neutral* individual that works with a group to improve how the group works together (process) to solve problems and make decisions.



Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation

Question: Can a group member be a facilitator?



Answer: As a rule, no. Group members are generally not *content-neutral*. However, in some cases (e.g., in Extension work) group members may fill in as a facilitator on an informal basis.

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation Dilemma

- In Extension work, we frequently get called in to facilitate, even in groups of which we are members.
- Why does this happen?
- How can we address the issue of content neutrality?





Facilitation

Good facilitation techniques are some of the most valuable tools a county agent or educator can employ, but they are also some of the most difficult to master.





Facilitation

- Why is this the case for those of us in Extension?



Facilitation

- Why is this the case for those of us in Extension?
 - We are educated as content area experts.
 - Materials are vast and there is sometimes little agreement in how to use different techniques.
 - It takes years to master some of the techniques.
- Can you think of an example?



Facilitation: Decision Making Options

1. Spontaneous agreement
2. One person decides
3. Compromise
4. Multi-voting
5. Majority voting
6. Consensus

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation: Spontaneous Agreement

- 100 percent agreement
- Seems to happen automatically
- Usually involves more trivial or simple issues
- Sometimes happen too fast
- Can involve “group think”

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation: One Person Decides

- Group decides to defer to one person (“expert”) on behalf of the group.
- A one-person decision is often a faster and more efficient way to get resolution.
- Accountability is clear.
- Can divide group if participants do not feel their voices were heard.

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation: Compromise

- Effective when group members are polarized
- Relies on there being an acceptable middle position
- Creates much discussion
- Not a win-win
- Useful when there are two distinct options

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation: Multi-voting

- Sometimes called “dot-voting”
- Used priority setting
- Systematic, democratic, participative
- Limited discussion
- May be limited understanding
- Useful when there are many options

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation: Majority Voting

- Used when there are either-or, yes or no situations
- Usually done through show of hands or secret ballots
- Needs to be preceded by thorough analysis
- Can create winners and losers

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation: Consensus

- Collaborative effort, unites groups
- Depends on groups analyzing situation and *jointly developing a solution*
- Systematic, objective and fact-driven
- Time consuming
- Used when agreement from whole group is essential

Source: Haskell, Cyr and McPhail. 2007. Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1 Curriculum. University of Maine Cooperative Extension



Facilitation: Decision Making Options

- Why did we just review these 6 decision-making options?



Facilitation: Decision Making Options

- Why did we just review these 6 decision-making options?
 - Part of understanding how groups work
 - Tools you may be using in different situations when working with groups





Facilitation Tools

- Many tools available
- Many good references in books and on-line
- One of most basic is good meeting management practices (see handout).
- Another basic technique is **Nominal Group Technique**





Nominal Group Technique

- Easy and commonly used group decision-making (multi-voting) process
- Keys to proper use:
 - Individual and silent idea generation
 - Limited discussion
 - Silent voting
- What are the advantages to using NGT?





Nominal Group Technique

- Facilitator presents a question or concern.
- Group members work **silently** for 2-3 minutes
 - Generate ideas
 - Write down each idea in a few words on sticky note
- All notes passed forward to facilitator who posts each idea **without** discussion.
- Once all the ideas are posted, facilitator reads each idea posted and asks for limited discussion to clarify ideas.



Nominal Group Technique

- Facilitator asks for help in condensing number of notes.
- Participants use dots to vote on their top ideas.
- Votes are counted for each idea and ideas are ranked by number of votes.
- Facilitator reads outcomes to group.



Tips On “Technique”

- Write BIG on sticky notes and use few words to suggest one idea per note.

**ONE IDEA
PER NOTE**



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FOUNDATIONS OF PRACTICE

IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL

1

Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics

Practice What You've Learned





Practice What You've Learned

- In the breakout rooms, you all will practice the NGT.
- Facilitators will be one of training team members.
- After you complete the process, your facilitator will lead you in a discussion of how you might use the NGT in your work.
- **Proceed to breakouts!**



Resources and References

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