A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders
Leadership

Leadership Styles L-1

With resourcefulness we can accomplish more than with brute power. With honesty and kindness we acquire authority.

--Folk Proverbs

Most leaders think very little about their own leadership style. They "do what comes naturally" when leadership is needed. If they are successful leaders, their instincts usually serve them well.

To improve your leadership style, however, you need to be more aware of how you lead. In this part of the leadership training, you will assess your own leadership style. Then you will learn about other styles.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

After mastering this section, you should be able to:

1. Define leadership.
2. Identify your own leadership style.
3. Describe facilitator leadership

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

A leader is someone who influences others. We all have an image of a leader. It can be described by such words as intelligent, courageous, persuasive, skillful, and powerful. Some people think of the Boy Scout qualities of leadership (trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent).

Most people have some ideas about leaders which can be called myths. Examples of these myths include:

1. some people are born leaders,
2. leaders defeat enemies,
3. leadership is a person, some have it and some do not,
4. leadership is no more than getting others to do what you want them to do,
5. leadership always involves action.

These are myths because

1. leadership is learned,
2. leaders help others accomplish group goals which need not involve an enemy,
3. anyone can be a leader at any time if that person helps the group meet its goals,
4. manipulative leaders eventually arouse opposition,
5. sometimes leadership involves not taking action.

As a beginning, leadership will be defined here as the art and science of helping others to decide on goals and work toward those goals. Of course, leadership is much more. This definition, however, will do for now.

Most writing on leadership deals with three styles of leaders. These three styles are:

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When a leader is directive, that leader initiates action, structures activities, motivates others, delegates responsibility, and praises or reprimands subordinates.

A democratic leader gets results by leading discussions, asking questions to involve others, encouraging others to volunteer for responsibilities, confirming commitments, and asking for a vote to get a consensus decision or a majority decision.

A non-directive leader refuses to make decisions for others, uses silence until someone in the group speaks out, gives non-verbal support (nods, smiles) to others who show positive leadership, and gradually fades out of a group when others in the group show an ability and a willingness to take over.

Different situations require different styles of leadership. Evacuation of a burning building calls for directive leadership. Deciding among several suggestions for an organization’s social event calls for democratic leadership. Helping qualified, experienced, enthusiastic committee heads calls for non-directive leadership.

Leadership will be most effective if a leader can look at a situation, decide what style of leadership is needed by the group, and act accordingly. When a leader is able to use each of the three leadership styles appropriately, we call that effective facilitator leadership. A facilitator then may direct, use democratic leadership or intentionally let the group provide its own leadership. The style used will vary according to the leader’s formal role within the group, the size of the group, skills and experience of group members, motivation and goals of group members. It also depends on group maturity (see module L-4 for a discussion of group maturity). An effective facilitator leader will learn to quickly consider all of these factors and choose the best leadership style for the situation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (15 minutes)

1. What has been your preferred style (directive, democratic or non-directive)?
2. Describe a situation where you might use the other two styles.
3. Why is “facilitator leadership” (which uses all three styles) better than any single style?
4. Do you have questions or comments on the reading?
EXERCISE:

How do you define "leadership?" You do have a definition whether or not you have thought about it. Think about leadership for a few minutes, then write down a definition.

Leadership is

Review the main points of the Background Reading, "What is Leadership?" Does your definition above

- Emphasize motivation?
- Discourage manipulation?
- Allow for all three leadership styles?
- Fit different situations where leadership is needed?
- Call for influencing others?
If necessary, rewrite your definition.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (15-20 minutes)

If working in a group each person should read the definition written for the individual exercise above. No comments should be made until all have finished. Then discuss:

1. What elements of the individual definitions do you like best?
2. Can you agree on a group definition?
3. Why is a personal definition of leadership important or helpful?

RESOURCE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Situational Leader, by Paul Hershey, Warner Books, 1984. BUILDING ON YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP STYLE

This topic will start with an exercise and then move to discussion and clarification.

EXERCISE (15 minutes):

Instructions - Think of a group or organization in which you are a member. Visualize yourself in the group. You are in charge of a group discussion. As you lead the group, the following problems arise. Read the first problem and the three possible solutions. Choose the best of the possible solutions and circle the letter which matches that solution. Keep in mind that you are in charge of group discussion for a particular group. Answer each of the other problems on the questionnaire.

Problem

1. Your group is having trouble getting started. You have tried to make everyone feel comfortable. You have allowed time to get acquainted. Everyone seems interested and cooperative, but reluctant to speak up.
Possible Solutions

a. Wait until they're ready to speak up.

b. Suggest that the group vote on what to do next.

c. Make some specific assignments to different people and help them complete their assignments.

2. The group is operating extremely well. Members get along well with each other. Discussion is lively. Everyone is contributing to the group. You want to insure that this continues.

Possible Solutions

a. Reduce your leadership. Let group members lead the group as much as possible.

b. Be sure agreement is reached on each point before proceeding.

c. Keep the group firmly under your control or the group will lose its momentum.

3. The group has been very productive. Two or three members have done most of the talking and all of the work. Everyone seems happy, but you would like to make some changes so that more members will get involved.

Possible Solutions

a. Tell it like it is. Outline the changes and see that they are made.

b. Propose the changes. Explain why they are needed, then let the group decide what will be done.

c. Don't do anything that might threaten group productivity.

4. The group is working well and relations among members are very positive. You feel somewhat unsure about your lack of direction of the group.

Possible Solutions

a. Leave the group alone.

b. Slowly assert yourself to give the group more direction.

c. Ask the group if you should provide more direction, then comply with their wishes.

5. The group was going great, but now it is falling apart. Members are beginning to bicker. It is hard to stay on the subject. Someone has just suggested that maybe the group should take a recess for two or three months.
Possible Solutions

a. Let everyone have their say. Don't get involved.

b. Take a vote on the suggested recess.

c. Propose a new course of action for the group. If no one strongly disagrees, make assignments and see that they are carried out.

6. Your group has completed an excellent discussion of a topic they chose, but no one wants to take any action although several activities would be appropriate and each activity has been discussed.

Possible Solutions

a. Suggest that the group move on to another topic. If no one disagrees, list possible topics.

b. Choose an activity for the group and make assignments.

c. Just keep quiet until the group arrives at a decision.

AFTER you have completed the questionnaire, proceed with scoring and assessment.

Scoring and assessing Your Leadership Style

Each of the three possible solutions to each problem corresponds to one of the three styles of leadership (see topic 1):

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In problem 1, the group needs direction. Voting would not be useful. A non-directive approach might work in the long run, but would be frustrating in the short term. (c) is the best solution.

In problem 2, there is no problem. "It ain't broke, so don't fix it!" (a) is the best solution.

In 3, the group is productive, but not everyone is contributing. The group needs help but a directive approach (a) might cause a rebellion. Non-directive (c) style would not get the quiet members involved. Go with (b).

Problem 4 is similar to 2. The group is working well. Resist the temptation to take action when none is needed. Try (a).
In problem 5, the group was all right, but now it is not. Leadership is required. Non-directive (a) leadership will only worsen the situation. If you vote (b), frustration may get in the way of reason. Directive leadership (c) is the best bet.

In 6, democratic leadership (a) is called for. A directive (b) approach would oppose the group’s stated position. Since the group is at a stalemate, solution (c), the non-directive style, would not help.

Score yourself. If you got all correct answers, you are a well-balanced leader. You rely equally on all three styles. Also, you use good judgment in assessing each situation.

If you did not get all of the correct answers, don't worry. You may have interpreted the problems in a different way than was intended. You may not be wrong at all.

But if you chose all "directive" solutions, you may need to work harder on the other two styles. An effective facilitator leader can use all three styles when necessary.

Caution!! The purposes of this exercise are to point out three leadership styles, to reflect your tendencies in a specific situation, and to stimulate discussion. This exercise is not sophisticated enough to categorize your leadership style. Please don't look at it that way.

Questions for Discussion (5 minutes)

1. How did you score on the Questionnaire? (Some individuals may not wish to share their scores at this point. They should be allowed to pass.)
2. Does this exercise tell you anything about your leadership style? What?
3. What is your "weakest" style? What could you do to strengthen this style? (Group members should help each other with suggestions.)

FACILITATOR LEADERSHIP

Learning more about facilitator leadership is important. In the United States, most people are biased about leadership. In this module we have defined leadership as "the art and science of helping others to decide on goals and work toward those goals." We have introduced the idea of a facilitator leader as one who uses directive, democratic or non-directive leadership styles equally well depending upon which style is appropriate.

In the United States we value democratic leadership. Historically, however, we have usually followed directive leaders. Non-directive leadership often has been viewed as weak leadership. We like the "take charge" leader as long as we agree on goals.

Military and business activities usually call for directive leadership. Most of our national leaders come from those backgrounds. But in community volunteer organizations, directive leadership can be overused with disastrous results.

Let's compare and contrast the traditional directive leader with the facilitator leader.
Directive Leader

- Leads from in front
- One style
- Gives orders, make statements
- Focuses on leader's strengths
- Man of action
- Know-it-all
- Says, "Don't just sit there, do something."

Facilitator Leader

- Often leads from behind
- Three styles
- Relies more on questions and suggestions
- Focuses on group's needs
- Sensitive, thoughtful person
- Seeks help from others
- Says, "Don't just do something, think about it first."

If you would try to improve your facilitator leadership, work on the following:

Directive leadership -

Before you "take command" of a group, think about it. Does the group need directive leadership? Are you the best person to direct? Who in the group will compete with you for leadership? How can you win that person's cooperation? Recognize individuals' contributions. Praise them in front of the group. Keep criticism infrequent, constructive and private.

Don't hog all of the jobs. Don't seek all of the glory. Delegate responsibility, make assignments, then see that those responsibilities are met. Think before you speak. Speak briefly and to the point. Get advice before you decide. When a decision is bad, admit it and reorganize.

Democratic leadership -

Make each group member feel important by asking for opinions, especially from the quieter members. Use a variety of techniques for decision-making (majority voting, negative voting, consensus, compromise). Ask questions to get others involved. Encourage group decisions; discourage individual decisions. Summarize agreements and commitments.

Non-directive leadership -

Listen, observe, consider what is happening and why. When group members say or do something useful, smile, nod in agreement, give a "thumbs up" signal.

When people ask for your opinion, turn the question back to them or to a quieter member by saying, "I'm not sure. What do you think Jill?" When people ask for you to decide, turn the decision back to them by saying, "I really don't feel I should decide for the group. What are the
possible decisions? What are the pros and cons of each? Which possibility would you choose?

In summary, a "Facilitator" Leader assesses the situation and chooses an appropriate leadership style:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiatives</td>
<td>Asks Questions to Involve Others</td>
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<td>Structures</td>
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<td>Motivates</td>
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<td>Delegates</td>
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<td>Confirms Commitments</td>
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**Exercise (5 minutes):**

On a separate sheet of paper, write a plan to broaden your leadership style. Describe a situation where you will intentionally use your weakest style. Give yourself a deadline to carry out your plan. Don't "cop out" on this exercise. It will require initiative and follow-through on your part. These are qualities of leaders that need to be practiced until they become habits.

**EXERCISE (15 minutes):**

Share your plan with a partner. Critique each other's plan. See if you can improve on your partner's plan. You may want to go one step further: decide how you can help each other carry out the plans.

**RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY**


Facilitating Community Change, by Donald R. Fessler, University Associates, 1976. (see especially pp. 32-34 and 50-53)


A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders
Leadership

Teamwork L-2

With patience you can accomplish the impossible, however, one bad cow can disrupt the entire herd.

It looks so easy when a group works well together. But teamwork doesn't just happen, it must be developed. Everyone knows the meaning of "teamwork." Right? At least, we think we do. For some people, teamwork means "getting people to do the job my way."

Included in this module are stages of team development and behaviors which contribute to the building of a team spirit. The role of facilitative leadership (see module L-1) in team building will also be examined.

Consensus building is a technique that many groups use to strengthen their sense of teamwork. Specific guidelines are provided in module L-9 (decision making) to develop consensus out of diverse opinion.

Most organizations have officers that are elected annually. The officer team is usually the glue that keeps the local organization working together. General duties of officers will be reviewed. Some options will be suggested for reorganizing and strengthening the officer team. If your group does not have formal officers, you may skip this section.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After mastering this module, you should be able to:

1. Describe the stages of team development.
2. Recognize behaviors which contribute to team building.
3. Identify the leadership roles necessary to develop a cohesive team.
4. Write a list of duties for club officers.

WHY TEAMWORK?

Much of our life is spent in team activities—as a family, on the job, and in community associations. Our accomplishments often depend on cooperative effort. Experience shows the value of teamwork on worker motivation. Teamwork can lead to (a) increased work output, (b) greater creativity, (c) increased work quality and (d) higher morale.[1] The results of a cooperative effort are often greater than the sum of the effects of the individual actions taken independently. Teamwork often results in better decisions and greater accomplishment.

The Japanese corporate management style has drawn much attention in recent years. The Japanese stress management through teamwork, where a spirit of family is developed,
information is shared, and decisions are jointly made. In contrast, our American society often encourages competition and independent effort over teamwork. “The best way to get something done is to do it yourself.” “Winning is the name of the game.” Jokes about committees are used to ridicule cooperative effort, e.g., “a camel is a horse put together by a committee.” We quickly become intolerant and impatient with others, and use force to get our way. This often works against our democratic ideals.

What is involved in team building? How do you get the magic of teamwork to work for you?

STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Team building is a gradual process which requires time and skill. The following stages help clarify that process.[2] In what stage are the groups to which you belong?

Stage 1: Get Acquainted

As a group first comes together polite, superficial dialogue occurs as we introduce ourselves to one another. We are guarded and controlled in what we say, and avoid disagreement. Based on our first impressions (or past experiences) we start to categorize each other and project future behavior. Some groups, particularly social groups, never progress beyond this stage.

Stage 2: Group Ideals

Members begin to question the team’s purpose, and to set objectives as to what the group is to accomplish. Members begin to express divergent opinions, and hidden agendas are sensed.Selective listening occurs, without real understanding. Differences are covered up, and the group "pushes ahead." Ambitious goals are established. These goals are usually general in nature, tend to overestimate the contribution each member will make, and underestimate the amount of time required. Members go along with the motions made, but often with limited commitment. Where there is conflict, decisions are put off.

Stage 3: Personal Agendas

Members begin to question the costs and benefits of their involvement, i.e., how much work will be involved, how will it benefit me, who will get the credit. Members are suspicious of each other's motives. As individual agendas are identified and expressed, members with similar needs and viewpoints begin to form alliances. Individuals become defensive and argumentative as differences surface. Little real listening occurs. Contrary ideas are often rejected without hearing them out. Gossip and rumors work against a team spirit. Members use power politics to get their way. Members become impatient with the group’s progress, and some drop out.

Attention is given to the talents and skills which each member might contribute to the effort. Hidden talents go undiscovered as the group is still dealing at a superficial level and is still blinded by first impressions and stereotypes. Humor is often sarcastic and negative.

Stage 4: Negotiation

Members begin to clarify end goals, and to negotiate means to reach those goals. There is a strong need for structure, which leads to a struggle for leadership. Individual agendas become more public. Group decisions are influenced as much by emotion and alliances as by logic. Voting is used to force decisions. This causes some individuals to feel left out. Some members
are silent while others dominate. Actions are taken, but often not to the satisfaction of all members.

The group has difficulty with follow-through, as many members are unwilling to change their personal schedules to accommodate the work of the group. Usually, however, at least a few members are willing to sacrifice individual agendas for the benefit of the group, and the team persists in its task.

**Stage 5: Consensus**

Compromise begins to emerge. Personal agendas are adjusted to accommodate others. Members strive to really listen to one another, and better understanding results. Information is openly shared. Questions are asked and issues clarified. Individuals continue to disagree, but they do so in an open, respectful manner.

Individuals talk out their differences and strive for consensus, without being pressured to conform.

Leadership responsibilities are shared, with the emphasis on facilitating rather than directing. The problem solving process is understood and used. Everyone's input is sought. Members have the opportunity to buy into the decision, resulting in a deeper personal commitment.

A higher level of trust develops. The group becomes more relaxed and open. Members are supportive of one another. Creativity flourishes. Members feel good about themselves, and are pleased with the progress being made. A team spirit has developed.

When new members join, the group regresses to an earlier stage, and team building begins anew. Sometimes a controversial issue will cause the team to regress. So teamwork is constantly being built and lost. Team members must be aware of this and keep trying to rebuild the team. As they do, certain behaviors will help.

**BEHAVIORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO TEAM BUILDING**

While there is no single model to good teamwork, certain elements are crucial to the building of a cohesive team. These are: [2]

**Intimacy and respect**

Members trust and share openly with one another. They value the uniqueness each brings to the group, and are sensitive to their differing needs and interests. The objective is not necessarily for everyone to like one another, but rather to understand and respect each other enough to work together in a cooperative supportive manner.

**Open Communication**

Information is freely shared, with no hidden agendas. Members are not afraid to speak up because of what others might say. Conflict (difference of opinion) is dealt with openly in a caring, respectful manner.
Listening

Members really listen to one another, and strive for better understanding. Questions are asked for clarification.

Common Objectives

The group has clear objectives, developed and mutually supported by group members.

Mutual Support

Members support and encourage one another. They give each other feedback, including constructive criticism.

Consensus Decision-Making

There is balanced participation in group discussion, without any one dominating. All members are directly involved in making group decisions. Members are skilled in the problem-solving process. Major decisions are made through consensus rather than majority vote. The group is concerned with building group harmony as well as task accomplishment.

Facilitative Leadership

Meetings are well planned and organized, with a clear agenda. Members establish ground rules for the operation of the group. Group leaders facilitate rather than control and direct group decision making.

Fun

Group work is made to be fun. Positive humor is used to relieve tension, and to create a relaxed atmosphere.

Use Member Resources

A conscious effort is made to become aware of each member's interests, knowledge, abilities and experience, and then to fully utilize them by matching them to the needs of the group. Members accept responsibility, and follow-through.

LEADERSHIP ROLES NECESSARY TO DEVELOP A COHESIVE TEAM

Team spirit doesn't just happen. It must be developed. The following leadership roles are essential to the development of a creative, team-oriented group. These roles can be assumed by group members as well as officers. Unless someone consciously fills these roles, it is unlikely that a team spirit will develop.[2]

Involving Role

This entails motivating others by getting them involved in sharing ideas, discussing issues, working out problems and making group decisions. It involves asking questions--preferably open-ended questions, that start with "how, what, where, when," and "why," rather than closed-ended
questions that start with "is, are, do," or "have." Closed-ended questions are constricting. They are answered with a "yes" or "no" or short phrase. Open ended questions, in contrast encourage the person to share further. For example, the question "What are your thoughts on this?", will be more involving than the question "Do you agree?" The involving role is carried to extreme when a person feels interrogated, and becomes defensive.

Listening Role

Team builders actively listen to others. This requires a certain physical presence--facing the person squarely, eye contact, supportive facial expressions, nodding, leaning forward, saying "good point," "go on," "explain that further," etc.--to indicate you are interested. Active listening also involves summarizing back to the person, in your own words, what you feel were the key points and feelings expressed. Then you wait for the other person to correct you, agree with you or continue talking. Such feedback ensures that the message received is what was intended.

Consensus Building Role

Consensus is built by clarifying and reaching agreement on the problem (or need), before debating possible "solutions." Alternatives are then explored, and modified to accommodate the needs and concerns of other group members, until a solution is found that is acceptable to all. Consensus avoids the forcing of decisions through majority vote. If a group gets bogged down, time is taken to clarify the objections of each side, and to modify the proposal to overcome those objections. (Consensus is discussed more fully in module L-9 on decision making.)

Supporting Role

Team builders support and encourage one another, recognizing talents, building self-confidence and trust. They are accepting of others, acknowledging that each person's thoughts, concerns and reasoning are important to the group. (Acceptance doesn't have to mean agreement, however.) Team builders give frequent recognition, brief praising for good work and good ideas. They are able to confront unsatisfactory behavior in a positive, caring manner.

Facilitating Role

The facilitator provides structure for planning and action to take place. This involves establishing an agenda and budgeting meeting time (directive leadership). It also involves helping the group decide how the meeting is to be conducted and it entails keeping communication channels open, but on target (democratic leadership). The facilitator helps group members reach their own conclusions rather than directing them to predetermined conclusions. Helpful suggestions are given--preferably through the use of questions, like, "Would it help if...?" rather than directives like, "You should...." The facilitator also makes the group aware of available resources. As a group matures, leadership needed tends to move from the directive to the democratic and then to the indirect leadership style (see module L-1).

GROUP SIZE

Finally, how well a team works together is dependent on group size. The best team size is 2-5 people. A team of 5-10 is workable; a team of 10-15 is difficult. The development of a cohesive team out of 15 or more people is unlikely, unless the group is frequently divided into sub-groups and frequent team building exercises are planned. The use of committees, discussed in the prior chapter, can provide such small group intimacy. Team building is an on-going process that involves more than a periodic pep talk.
OFFICERS

Officers have a major influence on the team spirit and behavior of a group, and on how effective the group is in accomplishing its goals. Different organizations use different officers. Usually, these are elected by tradition. There are no particular offices that "must" be filled. The organization's purpose, organization and annual plan of work will determine what officers are needed. Officers usually found in organizations, along with their duties, include:

PRESIDENT who 1. Presides at meetings. 2. Represents the organization to the public. 3. Sees that all club members have a part in each meeting. 4. Helps plan program for the year. 5. Votes only when there is a tie. 6. Calls another person to the chair to temporarily preside when wishing to take part in the discussion. Appoints committees with help of executive committee or general membership.

VICE-PRESIDENT who 1. Performs all the duties of the president when president is absent. 2. Helps plan program for the year. 3. Coordinates committee work. 4. Helps president with special meetings.

SECRETARY who 1. Keeps a complete record of club minutes. 2. Calls roll and keeps a record of attendance. 3. Reads minutes of the previous meeting. 4. Handles club correspondence. 5. Reads all information that comes to the club.

TREASURER who 1. Makes a report at each receipts and expenditures and of the club's treasury. 2. Pays bills voted by bills on file. 3. Suggests ways of raising money for club expenses. 4. Is a member of the fund raising committee.

NEWS REPORTER who 1. Writes interesting news articles about club's activities and sends them to newspapers and/or radio. 2. Keeps a scrapbook of news clippings, photos, banquet programs, etc.

Other less common offices may include:

RECREATION LEADER who 1. Plans any social hours or group recreation. 2. Helps arrange for refreshments, if any are to be served, at club meetings. 3. May ask others to take turns in conducting the recreation.

SERGEANT AT ARMS who 1. Assists the President in maintaining order 2. Sets up meeting room chairs, tables, equipment. 3. Introduces guests.

PARLIAMENTARIAN who 1. Assists the President, when requested, by making suggestions or rulings on the best way to handle a procedural problem.

OFFICER SELECTION AND TRAINING

Whatever officers are used by a group, their effectiveness depends on good orientation and training. This begins with elections.

Too many groups find themselves at the first meeting of the new year when someone suggests, "We need to elect officers today." What results is often a half-hearted effort that may be nothing more than a popularity contest.
Module V-3 in this curriculum provides tips on how to be more productive in selecting and recruiting people to serve. In making nominations, the special qualifications of the individual should be clearly stated, e.g., "I would like to nominate Tom Jones for president because...." Follow the example of the presidential nomination conventions, and include seconding speeches. Such nominating speeches clarify expectations, give recognition and indicate support. Make your election of officers invigorating.

Once elected, the chair or executive group as a whole should take time to discuss and clarify expectations, preferably in writing, for each officer and committee assignment relative to the group’s goals and plan of work for the year. Clarify and build on the preceding statements of officer responsibilities. This simple exercise can help overcome the uncertainty of expectations many newly elected officers have on taking office, and in turn help mold a dynamic leadership team. Without such orientation, newly elected officers are often unsure of their jobs and as a result accomplishments suffer.

EXERCISES

Exercise 1: a. Use the attached "Evaluation Form - Group Process." to evaluate team building within your organization or group.

b. Now develop a list of actions that might be taken to strengthen teamwork within that organization.

Within your study group, divide into small groups of three to five. (If everyone in the study group does not belong to the same organization, segregate yourselves so that everyone in each of the small groups evaluated the same organization.) Review each of the criteria. Ask each person to indicate how he rated the group on that item, and why. Then develop a composite list of actions that might be taken to strengthen teamwork within that organization.

Exercise 2: Complete the following statements. Multiple responses are encouraged.

a. "The hardest kind of person for me to get along with is ...."

b. "In my opinion, a good chairman is someone who ...."

Share (and discuss) your responses to statements (a) and (b) with others in your study group. Take no more than twenty minutes for this part of the exercise.

Now, as a group, discuss the following statements. Take no more than ten minutes per statement.

c. "I feel closest to others when ...."

d. "I get impatient with others when ...."

Take time to reflect on the following: How did you feel working in the study group compared to working alone? What did you learn about team building through this exercise?
EVALUATION FORM - GROUP PROCESS (4)

Evaluate your group progress in team building. Rate each variable by circling one of the numbers on the 1 to 5 scale. This will indicate how close you feel your group is to either extreme.

1 = Missing Completely 5 = Operating Ideally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. INTIMACY AND RESPECT</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members are reluctant to open themselves to others.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Members trust and share openly with one another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. OPEN COMMUNICATION</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member are guarded or cautious in discussion.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Members express both thoughts and feelings openly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. LISTENING</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members don’t really listen to one assumptions without really listening.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Members really listen to one another, they make quick and try hard to understand one another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. OBJECTIVES OR PURPOSES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives are not clear or well understood, and there is little commitment to them.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Objectives are clear, mutually supported, and there is full commitment to them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. MUTUAL SUPPORT</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members are defensive about themselves and their functions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Members are able to give and receive help and are supportive of one another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decisions are made by majority vote or by directive of the leader.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Major decisions are made by consensus, and everyone feels good about the decisions made.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. FACILITATE LEADERSHIP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The conduct of meetings and the decisions made are controlled by the chairperson.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>All members accept responsibility for productive discussions and are directly involved in decision making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. FUN</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings are often not seen as productive and enjoyable. Sarcastic humor and put downs are common.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Positive humor is used to relieve tension. The group is relaxed and enjoys what it is doing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. USE OF MEMBERS’ RESOURCES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals’ knowledge, abilities and experience are not fully known or utilized by the group.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>The group is familiar with each member’s knowledge, abilities and experience and fully utilizes them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 10. MUTUAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE |  |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members are suspicious of one another’s motives.</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
<th>Members trust one another and do not fear ridicule or reprisal.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members avoid arguments, smooth over differences, suppress or avoid conflicts.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Members search for, respect, and accept differences and work through them openly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. INVOLVEMENT – PARTICIPATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion is dominated by a few members.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>All members are involved and free to participate as they choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13. FLEXIBILITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group is locked on established rules and find it hard to change procedures.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Members readily change procedures in response to new situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REFERENCES:**


A tree is known by its fruit, a meeting by its results. Diligence is often better than science.

Recall some of the meetings you have attended this last year. Have you sometimes wanted to walk out early because of boredom, anger, or frustration? Wouldn't your organization be improved if you could make some simple suggestions that would make meetings more productive and enjoyable for the members?

Several decades ago, Will Rogers observed that two Americans couldn't meet on the street anymore without one banging a gavel and calling the other to order. Today "meeting" has become a dirty word to many people.

Actually, a meeting should be like a melody. The trick is to get through it without a sour note.

To have pleasant, productive meetings, you will need to understand what goes into planning and conducting such meetings. You will need to plan an agenda that is well organized, logical, deals with the important issues in a timely manner, but does not get sidetracked. You will need an officer team that can work together to conduct the meeting. You will need a basic understanding of parliamentary procedure. Finally, you will need to involve the general membership in the meeting.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

To master this section, you should be able to:

1. Plan a productive meeting.
2. Identify duties and responsibilities of all involved in conducting the meeting.
3. Involve other members through questioning.
4. Practice basic parliamentary procedure.

EXERCISE: EVALUATING MEETINGS

Think of a particular type of meeting where parliamentary procedure is followed (examples: 4-H Monthly Community Club Meetings, Rotary Luncheon Meetings, Fair Planning Committee Meetings). Use the "Meeting Checklist" below to evaluate that particular meeting. On each item, place a "-" if it is a problem which needs attention, a "+" if it is a strong point in the meeting, and a "o" if it's neither a problem or a strength or if it is irrelevant for any reason. After you have finished, review the items you gave a "-" and circle the 5 greatest problems. Below each of those 5 items, write an idea that would help correct the problem. Finally, write down specific personal steps and a deadline date that will discipline you to get the ideas into use to correct the 5 greatest problems that you identified.
MEETING CHECKLIST

____1. Insure a comfortable and conducive physical setting.

____2. Make sure that people see each other face-to-face.

____3. Get people introduced and at ease before the meeting starts.

____4. Have an agenda and stick to it.

____5. Deal with the most important things first.

____6. Develop the agenda by consulting key group members or people interested in the topics to be covered.

____7. Get the agenda out at least a week before the meeting.

____8. Under each agenda item, indicate the specific questions to be discussed so that meeting participants will have time to think about them beforehand.

____9. Start the meeting by clearly stating, and agreeing on, the meeting purpose.

The chairman should

____10. Facilitate, not direct or dominate.

____11. Help the group reach its own conclusions, rather than predetermined conclusions.

____12. Use the first 10-15 minutes of a meeting to (1) review and finalize the agenda and (2) agree on how the group will accomplish the task(s) before it.

____13. Set up and enforce appropriate rules for participation to give everyone an equal opportunity for self expression.

____14. Act as a traffic cop: (1) keeping the group to the task before it, (2) insuring open, positive communication, and (3) protecting individual participants from manipulation and personal attack.

____15. Be prepared. Don't call a meeting until the facts are together.

____16. Develop ground rules for participation in direct response to problems that the group anticipates or has encountered in past meetings.

____17. Keep the discussion going by asking pertinent questions.

____18. Indicate that input is appreciated.

____19. Rather than answering questions that are directed to the chair, he/she should rebound them to the group, "What do the rest of you think about this?"

____20. Periodically summarize.

____21. Don't force a group to make a decision before it is ready.

____22. Be aware of non-verbal communication, and respond to it.

____23. End the meeting with a review of what was accomplished, and what needs yet to be done
or decided.

___24. Review what each person has agreed to do in carrying out the activity or in preparing for the next meeting.

___25. Keep in touch with members between meetings.

___26. Make sure members follow through on their commitments.

___27. Avoid unnecessary meetings.

___28. Be certain that officers understand their responsibilities and carry them out.

___29. Be certain that committee members understand their responsibilities and carry them out.

___30. Be certain that the group’s goals are clear; are appropriate and are carried out?

Don’t get carried away! But do put enough thought into your meetings so that they don’t get out of control.

MEETINGS THAT STIMULATE

You can get people together, but it takes more than that. The mere inviting of participation, the calling of a meeting, or the appointment of a committee in itself will not insure the development of a productive group. Local groups often complain of the lack of participation. But when people do not show up at meetings, the group finds they are unprepared to handle the participation. They don’t know what to do with it, and as a result they eventually lose it. How then do you sustain a group once you’ve got it? How do you keep committees motivated and active?

• Insure a COMFORTABLE AND CONDUCIVE PHYSICAL SETTING for the meeting. If possible, arrange chairs in a semicircle so that people can see each other face to face. Get people introduced and at ease before the meeting starts.

• HAVE AN AGENDA and stick to it. DEAL WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS FIRST. Develop the agenda by consulting key group members or people interested in the topics to be covered. Get the agenda out--by word of mouth or in writing--at least a week before the meeting. Under each agenda item indicate the specific questions to be discussed so that meeting participants will have time to think about them beforehand. Most agendas are so brief that they say nothing. Likewise, if the agenda is distributed only a few minutes before the meeting starts, it loses much of its motivating force. GIVE PEOPLE A REASON FOR ATTENDING.

• START THE MEETING BY CLEARLY STATING, AND AGREEING ON, THE MEETING PURPOSE. Start out with a statement such as ”The purpose of this meeting is to... Does everyone agree?” Unfortunately, too many meetings start out with, ”Well, everyone knows why we’re here, so let’s get right down to business,” and the meeting wanders until people discover for themselves why they are there.

• The chairman should FACILITATE, not direct or dominate. He or she should help the group reach its OWN conclusions rather than predetermined conclusions. If a chairman does more than 15% of the talking, he or she is dominating rather than facilitating. On the other hand, don’t confuse facilitating with sitting back and letting things happen on their own. A group needs structure.

• BE WELL ORGANIZED. STRUCTURE YOUR MEETINGS. Unstructured, free-for-all discussion is rarely productive. Use the first 10-15 minutes of a meeting to (1) review and
finalize the agenda and (2) agree on HOW the group will accomplish the task(s) before it. When members are directly involved in setting the agenda and rules about how the meeting is to be conducted, they tend to assume more responsibility for what happens. Set up and enforce appropriate rules for participation, to give everyone an equal opportunity for expression and for being heard. For example, "We wish to make sure that everyone has the chance to speak, without repercussion. Let's go around the room with each person in turn expressing his opinion. We will limit discussion until after everyone has expressed an opinion. Does this seem appropriate?" The chairman should act as a traffic cop: (1) keeping the group to the task before it, (2) insuring open, positive communication, and (3) protecting individual participants from manipulation and personal attack. In short, the chairman should control the way the meeting is conducted, but not what is decided.

• BE PREPARED. DON'T CALL A MEETING UNTIL YOU FIRST HAVE YOUR FACTS TOGETHER. Identify and consult available resource people and knowledgeable individuals beforehand. Pull together all information, both pro and con, the group will need to consider in making a decision.

• Develop ground rules in direct response to problems your group anticipates or has encountered in past meetings. For example, "Last meeting I felt we got bogged down in arguing over possible solutions before we had agreed on the problem. What could we do to prevent that this meeting?" USE COMMON SENSE in developing your ground rules.

• Keep the discussion going by ASKING PERTINENT QUESTIONS. Ask open ended questions, rather than questions that can be simply answered by a "yes" or "no." Pass the discussion around the group to include those who are not taking part. Call out their name, and then ask the question, "Joe what do you think about..." But don't force people to talk if they don't want to. Also, DON'T EVALUATE WHAT THE PERSON SAID. AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF BEING CRITICAL. Indicate that you appreciate their input. The best way to stimulate discussion is to ask questions. People prefer to be asked, rather than told. Rather than answering questions directly, the chair should rebound them to the group, "What do the rest of you think about this?"

• PERIODICALLY SUMMARIZE. Summarizing during the meeting clarifies for the group where it's been and points the direction it needs to go.

• BE PATIENT. Don't force a group to make a decision before it is ready.

• BE AWARE OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION, and respond to it. What are people's expressions and actions telling you? If someone gives a disapproving look, ask his opinion next.

• END the meeting WITH A REVIEW of what was accomplished, and what needs yet to be done or decided. Review what each person has agreed to do in carrying out the activity or in preparing for the next meeting. This review is the first step in setting your next meeting's agenda. KEEP YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS BEFORE THE GROUP.

• KEEP IN TOUCH with members between meetings to get feedback as to progress being made. Make sure members follow through on their commitments. Encourage them. Don't let the momentum of the meeting die. The productiveness of a meeting is determined more after the meeting than during it.

• Finally, AVOID UNNECESSARY MEETINGS. There are other ways of communicating. Meetings should be seen as the heavy artillery of communication, not to be used unless absolutely necessary.
A good chairman and discussion leaders are essential to the success and motivation of any group. Nothing is more discouraging than a poorly organized, rambling, unproductive meeting. ANYONE, and I repeat, ANYONE, can make a good discussion leader/chairman if he or she only practices the above principles.

A group is only as good, however, as its individual members. The success of a meeting or group is the responsibility of ALL members/participants, not just the chair and the discussion leaders. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES MUST BE A JOINT GROUP EFFORT. To sit back and complain about others does little good.

Discuss the above principles at your next meeting. Use them. You'll be surprised how well they work.

- **RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY:**


**PLANNING AN AGENDA**

Now that you have some guidelines for productive meetings, you need to plan an agenda for each meeting. Following are two examples. The first is a 4-H club agenda for a monthly evening meeting. The second is a lunch meeting of a civic club.

- **Agenda Outline #1**

  Call to Order
  Flag Salute
  4-H Pledge
  Roll Call
  Introductions
  Minutes
  Officer Reports
  Project Reports
  Committee Reports
  Unfinished Business
  New Business
  Announcements
  Program
  Demonstration
  Project Talk
  Special Program (Invited Speaker)
  Recreation & Refreshments
  Adjourn
• Agenda Outline #2

Call to Order
Introduction of Guests
Song
Announcements
Invocation
Lunch
Minutes of Previous Meeting
Treasurer's Report
Committee Reports
Featured Speaker
Business
Review of Assignments and Responsibilities
Adjourn

The agenda that you use should reflect the needs of your group. You may be able to use one of the above agendas, slightly modify them, or you may need to develop something entirely different.

EXERCISE: AGENDA OUTLINE

Develop an agenda outline for a regular meeting that you attend. Share it with another person who attends those meetings. Do not get attached to your preliminary outline. Allow it to evolve, to change to meet the needs of your group. If you are the chair, use your agenda. If not, share it (gently) with the chair.

EXERCISE: USING THE AGENDA OUTLINE TO PLAN A MEETING

After you have developed an agenda outline, you are ready to use it to plan a specific meeting. Take a few minutes to write in items which need to be addressed during the next meeting of your organization. After you have all of your ideas on the outline, share it with another member of your organization. Discuss how you can improve the agenda for the next meeting of your group.

EXERCISE: MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES

This exercise builds on the previous exercise.

Go back over the agenda that was developed. Who will be responsible for each item? The persons chosen must agree. Once they have agreed they are committed. Their names are written to the left of each item on the agenda. Some will be reluctant to have their names placed on the agenda. They may ask, "What do I say?" or "How will I know when to speak?" The answer is to rehearse part or all of the meeting so that everyone involved knows what they say and when.

REHEARSE THE MEETING

Many meeting problems could be avoided if the officers would simply rehearse before the meeting. To rehearse you need a script. Following is a script for Agenda Outline #1, the 4-H monthly community club meeting. Read over it then write your own script for your group's meeting.
For a 4-H Community Club:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>(Who)</th>
<th>Says This:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call to Order</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>The meeting will please come to order. We are now holding the monthly meeting of .....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag Salute</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Martha will lead us in the flag salute. *****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-H Pledge</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>While we remain standing John will lead us in the 4-H Pledge. ****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll Call</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>The secretary will now call the roll of members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Please answer with ...(your favorite animal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Are there any guests to be introduced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Will the secretary now read the minutes of the last meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? If not they stand approved as read. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers' Reports</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Are there any officers' reports?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Reports</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Will the following project groups Reports please report on your activities since the last meeting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I move this report be accepted as given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Do I hear a second? Is there any discussion? All in favor say, Aye; all opposed, No. Motion carried. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Reports</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Are there any committee reports?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished Business</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Madam Secretary is there any unfinished business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Business</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Items on the agenda for new business include _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____, What is your pleasure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Is there any other new business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Are there any announcements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>At this time the Vice President will present the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>Vice Pres.</td>
<td>The demonstration tonight is by the Foods Club. Janene Luttrell will demonstrate how to make Strawberry Buttermilk Ice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Talk</td>
<td>Vice Pres.</td>
<td>Dan Waddoups and Jaylene Bryson will give a Project Talk on their beef project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>Vice Pres.</td>
<td>Jennifer Luttrell will lead recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments</td>
<td>Vice Pres.</td>
<td>Refreshments will be provided by .....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vice Pres.</td>
<td>Our next meeting will be: Place Date Time The program will include....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Reviews commitments made as a result of any committees appointed or as a result of business conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>The chair would entertain a motion to adjourn (needs a second - no debate -vote). Motion carried. This meeting is adjourned. *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Tap of gavel
Parliamentary Procedure

At this point the officers and members of your organization may need orientation to basic parliamentary procedure. Some will already know (or think they know) a lot about this subject. Do not allow the inexperienced members to be overwhelmed by too many details too soon.

Parliamentary procedure is simply a system of rules to insure that formal meetings run efficiently. Behind the rules are five basic principles:

1. One Question or Proposal at a Time.
2. The Right of Every Member to Free and Full Debate.
3. The Democratic Principle That the Will of the Majority Shall Prevail.
5. Courtesy.

Meetings are guided by the President using an agenda (list of items requiring attention at the meeting). When a matter is to be decided (usually under new or old business) a motion is required. A complete motion should have several parts:

1. Formal language to introduce it - "I move"
2. Substance - "that we have a picnic"
3. Time - "on July 4 at 6:00 p.m."
4. Place - "at the Smith's home"
5. Provision for a committee if appropriate - "with a committee appointed by the President"
6. Committee's power - "to plan the details and report back at the June Meeting."

Once the motion has been made, it must be seconded, then it may be debated. When members are done debating, or time runs out, the President may call for a vote by voice, hands or secret ballot.

In conducting the meeting, the President will maintain order through use of the gavel. Members, as well as the President, should be familiar with the following signals:

Several taps = come to order
3 taps = all rise
2 taps = all sit
1 tap = decision has been made (including adjournment).


EXERCISE: PRACTICING PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

With new officers and new members, try rehearsing to learn about parliamentary procedure. Ask a volunteer to be president and take the gavel. Then let each of the other members practice making a motion. Write the parts of a complete motion on the chalkboard or on newsprint for all to see. Have someone experienced in parliamentary procedure standing by to correct mistakes. After each member has made a motion, go on to seconding, discussing and voting on the motion. If the group wants more, gradually introduce amending the motion, point of order, tabling the motion, etc. But go slowly.
To introduce more complicated procedures, use the officers to demonstrate a procedure at the regular meeting. After the demonstration, answer questions and be sure the members practice the new procedure.

**QUESTIONING - THE ART OF INVOLVING OTHERS**

Parliamentary Procedure can be very intimidating to some people. Special effort is needed, especially by the presiding officer, to involve quiet members in the meeting. One effective technique is questioning.

People who have learned to ask thoughtful questions in meetings provide a service that is immeasurable. They encourage others to think; they draw others into the discussion; and they stimulate ideas. People who only make statements or give opinions tend to turn off discussion. Often they force other people to take sides, to agree or disagree. So the first step in gaining skill in questioning is to recognize that questions are valuable and powerful in discussions.

Some questions, however, are just as destructive as too many statements. Unclear questions do not stimulate, they confuse. Leading questions (you don't really like math do you?) are not useful either. They tell you the questioner's opinion, so they are more like statements than questions. Yes/No questions should also be avoided if possible.

The following checklist will help you decide if you have a useful question:

_____ 1. It is appropriate (on the subject being discussed; follows related questions in a logical order).

_____ 2. It is an open-ended question (cannot be answered by a simple yes or no; requires thinking before answering; avoids the appearance of traps).

_____ 3. It is concise and clear, using simple words.

_____ 4. The question is asked in a natural, conversational tone (no sarcasm, no shouting, no finger pointing).

The checklist above tells you how to ask questions. The last step is to know when to ask questions. Ask them when people are silent but interested. Do not interrupt to ask a question unless the speaker is clearly off the subject. Ask a question when you want more discussion. You may direct it to someone who has not had a chance to speak. Try to avoid asking a question when it might embarrass someone. After asking a question, pause, give time for thought, before asking another question. Ask questions when you need more information or when you need to know if people are in agreement.

Finally, when someone answers your question, react favorably. Nod, smile or say something like "thank you" or "that's an interesting idea." You may want to ask a follow-up question if it seem appropriate ("would you explain your answer" -- "what do you mean by . . .").

Now practice questioning skills. Anticipate some questions that you might ask at the next meeting. Write them down and be prepared to ask them when appropriate. With some experience, you'll be able to use questioning without preparation.
EXERCISE: INVOLVEMENT THROUGH QUESTIONING

By asking thought-provoking questions, we can involve more members in the discussion. What are some questions that might be asked about our agenda items to stimulate discussion by the membership at the next meeting? Who will ask them? Write down your answers.

Evaluate each question using the checklist above.

CONCLUSIONS

Formal meetings are critical to most organizations. If they are well planned and conducted, the organization will be strengthened. If the meetings are poorly planned and/or conducted then those meetings can be the main reason why a group falls apart or at least becomes inactive.

A final bit of advice. Plan meetings that run no longer than one hour whenever possible. Unless you have a very special type of meeting (i.e., all-day workshop), members will lose interest after an hour. Even then an hour long meeting should have lots of variety and involve all members actively. That takes plenty of planning and preparation before the meeting day.
A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders
Leadership

Small Group Dynamics L-4

The person who never takes a risk, never learns. (nothing ventured, nothing gained)

Not all meetings are conducted strictly by Robert's Rules of Order. For smaller, more informal meetings, fewer rules are needed. For some people, few rules are desirable for committee meetings, lunch discussion groups, social meetings or even many educational workshops.

However, without Robert's Rules, a presiding officer or committee chair must be much more skillful in leading the meeting. The leader must be aware of when to abandon Robert's Rules for a more relaxed meeting. The degree and style of leadership may depend heavily on "group maturity." Certainly knowledge of other aspects of group dynamics is very important in leading informal groups.

Since this module is quite long, you may choose to work only on specific parts according to the objectives below.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

After mastering this module, you should be able to:

1. Identify types of meetings within your organization where informal rules of conduct apply.
2. Assess "group maturity."
3. Conduct or evaluate a small group discussion.
4. Plan to use different group techniques for appropriate situations.

EXERCISE: TYPES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS

Take 2-5 minutes to list some of the meetings that you attend which do not use parliamentary procedure. Think of all the different groups that you belong to. Consider:

School
Church
Social
Recreational
Government
Community
Economic
Family
Also consider types of meetings:

Committees
Study Groups
Discussion Groups
Luncheon Meetings
Commissions
Advisory Groups

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A GROUP

Often external rules, like parliamentary procedure, are less important than "group dynamics." But what does that term imply? How do we recognize "Group dynamics?" We all have experience in groups. Yet we rarely take the time to observe what is happening in those groups. We get involved in the discussion and ignore the dynamics of the group--how it works. If we can become more aware of group dynamics, we can be better observers and better participants.

So what do we look for? What is there to see in a group?

I. Communication

One of the easiest aspects of group process to observe is the pattern of communication.

1. Who talks? For how long? How often?

2. Who do people look at when they talk?
   a. Single others, possibly potential supporters
   b. Scanning the group
   c. No one

3. Who talks after whom, or who interrupts whom?

4. That style of communication is used (assertions, questions, tone of voice, gestures, etc.?)

5. Do people change their participation (become quiet or more talkative or change tone of voice)? Why?

6. How are silent people treated? Is silence due to consent, disagreement, disinterest, fear, fatigue?

The kinds of observations we make give us clues to other important things which may be going on in the group such as who leads whom or who influences whom.
II. Content vs. Process

When we observe what the group is talking about, we are focusing on the content. When we try to observe how the group is handling its communication, i.e., who talks how much or who talks to whom, we are talking about group process. In fact, the content of group discussion often tells us what process issue may be on people’s minds. For example:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Process</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Talking about problems of authority back home may mean…</td>
<td>that there is a leadership struggle going on in the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Talking about how bad group meetings usually are at the plant may mean…</td>
<td>that members are dissatisfied with the performance of their own group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Talking about staff who don’t really help anybody may mean…</td>
<td>dissatisfaction with the leader of the group.</td>
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At a simpler level, looking at process really means to focus on what is going on in the group and trying to understand it in terms of other things that have gone on in the group.

III. Decision

Many kinds of decisions are made in groups without considering the effects these decisions have on other members. Some try to impose their own decisions on the group, while others want all members to participate or share in the decisions that are made. Some decisions are made consciously after much debate and voting. Others are made silently when no one objects to suggestion.

1. Does anyone make a decision and carry it out without checking with other group members (self authorized decision)?

2. Does the group drift from topic to topic with no decision?

3. Who supports other members’ suggestions or decisions?

4. Is there any evidence of a majority pushing a decision through over other members’ objections? Do they call for a vote (majority decision)?

5. Is there any attempt to get all members to agree before a decision is made (consensus)?

6. Does anyone make any contributions which do not receive any kind of response or recognition (plop)? What effect does this have on the member?
IV. Influence

Some people may speak very little, yet they may capture the attention of the whole group. Others may talk a lot—but other members may pay little attention to them.

1. Which members are high in influence? That is, when they talk others seem to listen.

2. Which members are low in influence? Others do not listen to them or follow them. Is there any shifting of influence?

3. Do you see any rivalry in the group? Is there a struggle for leadership? What effect does it have on other group members?

V. Task vs. Relationships

The group's task is the job to be done. People who are concerned with the task tend to

1. make suggestions as to the best way to proceed or deal with a problem;

2. attempt to summarize what has been covered or what has been going on in the group;

3. give or ask for facts, ideas, opinions, feelings, feedback, or search for alternatives;

4. keep the group on target; prevent going off on tangents.

Relationships means how well people in the group work together. People who are concerned with relationships tend to

1. be more concerned with how people feel than how much they know;

2. help others get into the discussion;

3. try to reconcile disagreements;

4. encourage people with friendly remarks and gestures.

VI. Roles

Behavior in the group can be of three types:

1. that which helps the group accomplish its task;

2. that which helps group members get along better (relationships); and

3. self oriented behavior which contributes to neither group task nor group relationships. Examples of these types of behavior, called roles, are:
**Task Roles**

1. Initiating: proposing tasks or goals; defining a group problem; suggesting ways to solve a problem.

2. Seeking information or opinions: requesting facts; asking for expressions of feeling; requesting a statement or estimate; seeking suggestions and ideas.

3. Giving information or opinion: offering facts; providing relevant information; stating an opinion; giving suggestions and ideas.

4. Clarifying and elaborating: interpreting ideas or suggestions; clearing up confusion; defining terms; indicating alternatives and issues before the group.

5. Summarizing: pulling together related ideas; restating suggestions after the group has discussed them; offering a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject.

6. Consensus testing: asking if the group is nearing a decision; taking a straw vote.

**Relationship Roles**

1. Harmonizing: attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tension; getting people to explore differences.

2. Gate keeping: helping to keep communication channels open; facilitating the participation of others; suggesting procedures that permit sharing remarks.

3. Encouraging: being friendly, warm, and responsive to others; indicating by facial expression or remarks the acceptance of others’ contributions.

4. Compromising: when one’s own idea or status is involved in a conflict, offering a compromise which yields status; admitting error; modifying one’s position in the interest of group cohesion or growth.

**Self-Oriented Roles**

1. Dominator: interrupts others; launches on long monologues; is over-positive and over-dogmatic; tries to lead group and assert authority; is generally autocratic.

2. Negativist: rejects ideas suggested by others; takes a negative attitude on issues; argues frequently and unnecessarily; is pessimistic, refuses to cooperate; pouts.

3. Aggressor: tries to achieve importance in group; boasts; criticizes or blames others; tries to get attention; shows anger or irritation against group or individuals; deflates importance or position of others in group.

4. Playboy: is not interested in the group except as it can help him or her to have a good time.
5. Storyteller: likes to tell long "fishing stories" which are not relevant to the group; gets off on long tangents.

6. Interrupter: talks over others; engages in side conversations; whispers to neighbor.

7. Poor me: tries to get the group's attention to deal with own personal concerns, discomfort, bad luck, etc.

A group member who can play a variety of task and relationship roles and can avoid self oriented roles will be most helpful to the group.

VII. Membership

One major concern for group members is the degree of acceptance or inclusion they feel in the group.

1. Are there any sub-groupings? Sometimes two or three members may consistently agree and support each other or consistently disagree and oppose one another.

2. Do some people seem to be outside the group? Do some members seem to be "in"? How are those "outside" treated?

3. Do some members move in and out of the group? Under what conditions do they move in and out?

VIII. Feelings

During any group discussion, feelings are frequently generated by the interactions between members. These feelings, however, are seldom talked about. Observers may have to make guesses based on tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and many other forms of nonverbal cues.

1. What signs of feelings do you observe in group members? Anger, irritation, frustration, warmth, affection, excitement, boredom, defensiveness, competitiveness, etc.

2. Do you see any attempts by group members to block the expression of feelings, particularly negative feelings? How is this done? Does anyone do this consistently?

IX. Norms

Standard or group rules always develop in a group in order to control the behavior of members. Norms usually express the beliefs or desires of the majority of the group members as to what behaviors should or should not take place in the group. These norms may be clear to all members (explicit), known or sensed by only a few (implicit), or operating completely below the level of awareness of any group members. Some norms help group progress and some hinder it.

1. Are certain areas avoided by the group (eg., sex, religion, talk about present feelings, about others in the group, discussion of leader's behavior, etc.)? Who seems to reinforce this avoidance? How do they do it?
2. Are the group members overly nice or polite to each other? Are only positive feelings expressed? Do members agree with each other too readily? What happens when members disagree?

3. Do you see norms operating about participation or the kinds of questions that are allowed? (e.g., "If I talk you must talk"; "If I tell my problems you have to tell your problems"). Do members feel free to probe each other about their feelings? Do questions tend to be restricted to intellectual topics or events outside the group?

X. Group Atmosphere

Something about the way a group works creates an atmosphere which in turn is revealed in a general impression. Insight can be gained into the atmosphere characteristic of a group by finding words which describe the general impression held by group members.

1. Is the atmosphere one of work, play, satisfaction, taking flight, sluggish, tense, etc.

2. Who seems to prefer a friendly congenial atmosphere? Is there any attempt to suppress conflict or unpleasant feelings?

3. Who seems to prefer an atmosphere of conflict and disagreement? Do any members provoke or annoy others?

XI. Group Maturity

Group maturity is defined as the ability and willingness of group members to set goals and work toward their accomplishment.

Characteristics of a Mature Group

1. An increasing ability to be self-directed (not dependent on the leader).

2. An increased tolerance in accepting that progress takes time.

3. An increasing sensitivity to their own feelings and those of others.

4. Improvement in the ability to withstand tension, frustration and disagreement.

5. A perception of the common denominators which bind the group as well as areas of individual difference.

6. A better ability to anticipate realistic results of behavior and to channel emotions into more socially acceptable ways of expressing these emotions.

7. An increased ability to change plans and methods as new situations develop.

8. A decrease in time needed to recover from threatening group situations. Peaks and valleys of emotional group crises become less personal.
9. Increased efficiency in locating problems, engaging in problem solving and providing help to individuals as needed.

10. A willingness to face one's own responsibilities and to assist others when help is needed.

11. An acceptance of the right of the other person to be different.

Assessing group maturity is especially important for a group leader. An immature group needs direction. Directive leadership is usually best. If a group is very mature, nondirective leadership is usually best. In between the extremes of very mature and very immature, democratic leadership will be the best bet depending on the situation (see module L-1).

STUDY GROUP EXERCISE:

Enough theory! It's time for some experience. Form small groups of 5-10 members. For the next 20 minutes you are going to have a group discussion to choose a new logo to represent this group. Your group task is to use the next 20 minutes to design your own logo. You may use symbols found in business, organizations, or sports teams that you know about, or design something from scratch. There are no rules as to "how" you go about this task. However, you should choose a group observer who uses the Observation Sheet below to record group interaction. This group observer also keeps track of the 20 minute time limit. When you are ready, START.

**OBSERVATION SHEET**

Individual Participation in Group Discussion

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What happened in your group?

2. Did it complete its task? Why or why not?

3. Was the group productive?

4. Was everyone completely comfortable?

5. Who were the "leaders" in the group? (Remember, a leader is anyone who helps the group, at any point, to set goals or work productively toward those goals).

6. How could this group improve?

7. What did you observe in your group concerning
   a. communication,
   b. content vs. process,
   c. decisions,
   d. influence,
   e. task vs. relationships,
   f. roles,
   g. membership,
   h. feelings,
   i. norms,
   j. group atmosphere?

Refer back to the section on "What to Look for in a Group" if needed.

8. If you were assigned to lead your group with the same task, how would you have acted?

LEADING SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Most small groups will have one member designated to lead the discussion. If that member is you, then you need to be prepared.

Your Job as Discussion Leader

The best discussion leader is one who can get others to talk. A talkative leader usually cuts down on the group members' participation. Your job is to:

• arrange the group so they are sitting as close together as possible, and can see each other;
• get others' ideas out for consideration;
• keep the group on the subject;
• encourage everyone to participate;
• watch the time so you can cover the discussion questions of most interest to your group;
• summarize important points; and
• allow time for the “wrap-up.”

The following three sections spotlight some steps in a discussion that are particularly important to handle well.

**Parts of the Discussion...setting the stage**

As a discussion leader, you:

• see that everyone is introduced;
• select a recorder if one has not been appointed;
• explain what the discussion group is expected to accomplish;
• try to be friendly and good-natured, but show you mean business;
• lay the ground rules:
  o everyone is expected to stay on the subject;
  o no one dominates the discussion—no long talks;
  o each member will have a chance to participate;
  o the purpose of the discussion is not to come up with one “right” answer.
• explain that your role is to:
  o withhold your own opinion;
  o try to keep the group on the subject;
  o assist the recorder in summarizing the discussion.
• ask if there are any questions.

**Parts of the Discussion...leading the discussion**

Everyone should participate in the discussion. However, some groups expect the leader to do most of the talking, and may remain silent at the beginning of the discussion. Your job is to get them to do the talking. To do that:

• ask the group members for first reactions or general impressions on the topic.
• if you have prepared discussion questions, ask someone to read the first discussion question. If you do not have prepared questions, have the members raise some that they would like to discuss.
• if there is a silence, try to wait out the group members. Remain silent 2 or 3 minutes. Usually, someone will say something. This puts the responsibility on the group members, and takes it off your shoulders.
• your occasional nod or “uh-huh” will encourage more response, but there should not be comment on each response.
• as a last resort, ask someone to respond.

Once the discussion is going, the leader can best help the group by letting the group members do the talking. Try to bring everyone into the discussion and keep it on the subject.

If problems arise during the discussion, check the "What to do if" section (below). Otherwise, sit back and make an occasional summary of the discussion. Five minutes before the end of the discussion, wrap up the discussion.
**Parts of the Discussion...wrapping up**

If the discussion was good, say, "We had a good discussion," OR if it didn't go so well, find something good to say about it. Repeat briefly the purpose of the discussion. Say, "In our discussion, we were asked to .....” Ask the group to summarize the important points. Say, "What do you think are the important points we have made?” Ask the recorder to read the report back to the group.

**What To Do If...the group can’t get started**

Try having someone rephrase the discussion topics. Go around the group asking if someone has a response. Ask one of the resource people to tell more about the topic. Go on to another discussion topic. Ask another group member to introduce it.

**What To Do If...someone dominates the discussion**

Ask, "How do the rest of you feel about that idea?” Say, "Okay, that's a good point; may we move on to someone else?” Point out the problem by saying, "We have heard from .....let's hear from some of the rest of you.” Go around the group again, asking if someone has a response. As a last resort, restate the ground rules.

**What To Do If...the group gets off the subject**

Ask, "Are we off the subject?” Say, "We're talking about , but our topic is supposed to be____.”

**What To Do If...interest lags**

Be sure the discussion does not remain too long on a single point. Say, "Have we covered that point and may we go on?” Is someone dominating the discussion? See section on "What to do if...someone dominates the discussion.” If no one talks for a while, the leader need not step in—sometimes people need time to think. Maybe people need more information. Say, "Do we have enough information? Should we call on a resource person at this point?” Or, "Is this an area we will need to study on our own?”

**What To Do If...discussion gets too heated**

Say, "We have two viewpoints here. Are there any other views?” Emphasize the importance of getting many viewpoints. Say, "This really isn't the place where we can settle that issue, so maybe we should move on to the next topic.” Remind the group that in this discussion we aren't looking for one right answer. Differing views are welcome.

**EXERCISE:**

Take turns leading and evaluating group discussion. Write several discussion topics on slips of paper. Choose topics that are issues of concern to group members. Examples:

- What position should our group take on the new bond issue?

- How might our club improve its image?
- How could U.S.-China relations be improved?

Get a volunteer to be the first leader. Get a second volunteer to evaluate the discussion leader. Give both volunteers time to read the following checklist:

Did the discussion leader:

___ Introduce the issue creating interest?

___ Organize the discussion so the major points were taken up in the most effective order?

___ Encourage all to participate?

___ Encourage informality?

___ Relate the issue to concerns of individual members?

___ Ask clear, concise questions?

___ Ask thought-provoking questions?

___ Arrange for a break during long sessions?

___ Lead members of the group to see that they were making progress?

___ Summarize occasionally?

___ Close discussion with generalizations, conclusions and applications?

___ Manage to do all of the above without seeming to dominate?

Everyone else is a group member. When the leader and evaluator are ready, start the discussion. Each discussion should be allowed to go for about five minutes, followed by the evaluator's report from the checklist. As time allows, each member should have a chance to be a discussion leader and an evaluator.

EXERCISE: GROUP RULES

Some small groups have recurring problems with their group discussion.

When this happens, a printed agenda with ground rules can be given to group members. Read the following example, then write your own ground rules for a meeting that you attend where ground rules would be helpful.
YAVAPAI DISTRICT III NUCLEUS MEETING

May 20, 19__ - 7:00 p.m., County Building, Cottonwood, AZ

AGENDA

Introductions

Objectives:

• To help make County government more efficient and more responsive.
• To improve communication between County officials and representatives of unincorporated communities of District III.
• To improve communication among representatives of unincorporated communities.

Purpose: Identify problems and refer to proper agency.

Ground Rules:

• Keep it positive—not a gripe session
• Avoid political soapbox
• Allow the written questions to be answered before going to open forum
• Avoid repetition in questions/comments. Make them brief.

Supervisor's Report

Questions Sent In

Open Forum

Schedule Next Meeting: Date _____, Time _____, Place ____________.

GROUP TECHNIQUES

To be an effective group leader in all situations, you need an arsenal of techniques to use when appropriate. The following pages present some techniques. With preparation and practice, you will gain competence in choosing and using the best technique for a particular situation.

I. Common Forms of Presentations include:

A. LECTURE - an oral presentation of organized thoughts and ideas by a speaker.

B. SYMPOSIUM - a formal presentation by several platform speakers.

C. PANEL DISCUSSION - a presentation by several persons who discuss a topic in which they have a special knowledge.

D. COLLOQUY - the presentation of a problem by members of the audience to be discussed by a group of experts who may ask questions or make comments regarding the presentation.
One of the most commonly used (and misused) of these techniques is the panel discussion. A panel refers to the discussion of a topic by a selected group of 3 to 6 people under the direction of a moderator. It can be a very effective technique in bringing out different facts and points of view on a given topic.

Select panel members with care, to include: 1) persons vitally interested in the topic; 2) persons who have different views, experiences and sources of information on the subject to be discussed; 3) persons willing to express themselves before a group.

The moderator must remain neutral. He or she: 1) sets time limits for the discussion; 2) opens the discussion with a question or statement that focuses attention on the central point(s) to be discussed; 3) asks questions, as needed to help clarify points made; 4) interrupts when necessary to keep the discussion on track; 5) periodically summarizes; 6) keeps the discussion moving so that all points are covered in the allotted time; and 7) insures that panel members share the allotted time equally, with no one dominating.

A panel commonly begins with each member stating a position. Then group members react to and ask questions of each other. Panel members should prepare their introductory statements but not rehearse with each other. Panels shorter than 20 minutes seldom succeed, and group interest tends to wane if longer than 40 minutes.

II. Small Group Discussion Techniques include:

A. CO-LEADERS IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS - the use of a team approach of two or more persons in leading a discussion.

B. HUDDLE GROUPS or BUZZ GROUPS - the use of a group of 3-7 persons who discuss a problem or issue and then reporting to a larger group.

C. LEADERSHIP TEAM - the use of a group of four persons to conduct a discussion as follows: discussion leader; process observer; recorder; and resource person.

D. LISTENING TEAM - the use of two to four persons who listen, evaluate, and then pose questions to persons who have made a formal presentation.

E. ROLE PLAYING - the use of persons who act out a situation in order to promote additional insights or deeper emotional feelings.

F. BRAINSTORMING - the use of free expression for creative thinking without the influence of judicial reasoning (see separate module on "brainstorming" in the section on "learning/teaching techniques").

G. DIADS - the use of pairs to interview each other or clarify their own ideas.

H. ROUND ROBIN SHARING - each group member in turn briefly share ideas, opinions, suggestions or concerns in response to a question raised.

Small group interaction brings about greater cooperation, consensus and commitment among participants than is possible in a larger group. Small groups permit leadership responsibility to be shared by all who contribute.
Some considerations in making small group discussion effective are:

1) provide the group with pertinent facts and background information on the problem or issue to be discussed before breaking into small groups;
2) divide into small groups by counting off to insure heterogeneous groups;
3) clearly define the group assignment, and post it for all to see; and
4) Set a time limit at which time reports will be called for.

Round-Robin Sharing needs more explanation. Start by passing out index cards, and having each person jot down brief suggestions, opinions, concerns in response to the question posed by the group leader. This writing exercise gives people time to think. It helps each person clarify what is important. Also, people are often more willing to write something down and then read it, than they are to speak spontaneously. This writing exercise is particularly useful in setting goals.

As each person shares an opinion, concern, suggestion, list them on newsprint or a blackboard for all to see. This clearly shows the individual that he has been heard. It avoids miscommunication. It gives the person immediate recognition. It reduces the tendency of people to repeat themselves. And it also serves as an official record of the meeting.

An important ground rule: instruct the group that during the round-robin sharing no discussion is permitted—except for questions of clarification, i.e., "What did you mean by...?" It should be stressed that the purpose of the round-robin is to share, to listen, to empathize, and try to understand and appreciate the opinions of others. Its purpose is not to discuss, argue the pros and cons of, or refute the opinions, suggestions and concerns expressed. There will be time for that later. This approach insures input from everyone in the group. It encourages people to speak up without the fear of being criticized or put down by others. Also, it prevents any individual from dominating the discussion. It directly involves all members in the decision-making process.

III. Special Techniques to Improve Meetings include:

A. Stop Session;

B. Verbal or Written Reports;

C. Study Committee; and

D. Negative Voting.

A Stop Session is taking a break when things get heated or bogged down. It involves putting aside the "content" of the discussion for a couple of minutes to focus on the "dynamics" of the group—what is happening within the group. A stop session can be called at any time that problems arise, i.e., "I feel uncomfortable about... How do the rest of you feel?" or "Hey, the negativism in this room is tremendous. Let's take a look at it." or "We seem to have reached a stand-off. Let's take a break and then come back and do some brainstorming. Maybe we can find another approach that would be acceptable to both sides." Open acknowledgment of the problem/frustration before the group, followed by a short rest, can be quite therapeutical.

Verbal or Written Reports should present all sides of an issue, not just your own point of view. Don't stack the deck. One of the worst traps that people fall into when they make a report is to offer only their conclusions, thereby excluding group members from how they arrived at their conclusions.
Prepare your audience. Clearly state at the beginning of your presentation why you are giving it, and what you want people to do with it. Keep to the essential points. Don't overload. Reports should not exceed 5 to 15 minutes in duration. A rule of thumb: If it takes more than 60 seconds to explain a point, you are telling a story rather than giving necessary information.

Seek feedback. Communication is a two-way street. You haven't communicated until you know that others in the group have heard you correctly and comprehend what you meant. Use visuals. People retain 10% of information received verbally; 20% of information received visually; and 50% of information received verbally and visually. Be prepared. Take time before the meeting to think through what you want to say and how you wish to say it. Don't try to "ad lib" it.

Study Committees are formed to gather information and/or make recommendations for consideration by the total group. Due to their small size, usually 3 to 7 members, committees are easier to convene and are more flexible in their ability to gather information, consult with outside experts, and perform the tasks assigned them.

Study committee members and their chair should be carefully hand picked" for the job. The committee should include: 1) persons vitally interested in the task; 2) persons with access to the information desired; 3) persons with pertinent knowledge, skills and experiences.

The committee's "charge," what it is expected to do and when it is to be finished, along with the committee's powers and operating budget should be clearly spelled out, preferably in writing. Be specific. Vague, hastily conceived, indefinite task assignments are the prime cause of committee failure.

Every member of the committee should have the opportunity to review and react to the final report before it is submitted to the parent group. Every effort should be made to reach consensus. If consensus is not possible, a minority report should be made stating the reasons for dissent from the majority view.

Negative Voting can often be effective when a group is equally divided over several proposed solutions. Ask members which solution they cannot accept and ask them to be sure they have a sound objection. Eliminate those solutions which a majority of the group cannot accept.
IV. **Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If we want to…</th>
<th>Use a…</th>
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<tr>
<td>give information lecture;</td>
<td>panel discussion; written or verbal report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>generate ideas</td>
<td>brainstorming session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>determine opinion or get input</td>
<td>round-robin sharing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>investigate, study or gather information</td>
<td>study committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>define and/or solve a problem</td>
<td>small group discussion using the problem solving process (see module P-7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>reach group consensus</td>
<td>negative voting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>formalize a group discussion</td>
<td>vote; parliamentary procedure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>gossip, joke, complain or be entertained</td>
<td>social hour or luncheon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>see a problem from someone else’s viewpoint</td>
<td>role playing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>train inexperienced members to lead committees or leadership team</td>
<td>co-leaders in group discussion.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

Which group technique would you use

- for an icebreaker to get strangers better acquainted,
- when you have four outside experts who have four contrasting solutions to a local problem,
- when you need to come up with fresh ideas for an old problem,
- when your club has split into two antagonistic groups over an issue and both groups reject compromise,
- (add your own situations).
CONCLUSION

Leading small group discussions takes practice. Re-read the sections of this chapter and apply them whenever you have an opportunity to lead a small group. Use the buddy system—someone you can trust to help you anticipate and prepare in advance then evaluate after the group has met.

REFERENCES


A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders
Leadership

Setting Personal Goals L-5

_Those who deceive themselves shouldn’t complain about others’ deceptions._

Leaders need to know where they are going. Before a leader can influence others, that leader needs to get personal goals in order. It is hard to lead if one has personal problems which get in the way.

Going in too many directions can be a personal problem which dilutes effective leadership. Goal setting can help lessen the directions and increase productivity in the most important activities.

Over a long period of time, an effective leader must be a disciplined person. Setting personal goals is a first step toward self-discipline.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

After finishing this module you should have a list of lifetime goals and your top three priorities for these goals.

**EXERCISE -- YOUR LIFETIME GOALS (15 minutes):**

Get several pieces of paper, a pencil or pen, and a watch or clock with a second hand. Set aside about fifteen minutes. Write, “What are my lifetime goals?” at the top of the first sheet of paper.

Now, take exactly two minutes to list answers to the question on your paper. Of necessity, you will have to stay very general and abstract, but you should still have time to take account of personal, family, social, career, financial, community, and spiritual goals. Try to make your list as all-inclusive as you can. Try to get as many goals down in the two minutes as possible. During this listing stage you are not committed to any of the goals that you write down, so record whatever comes into your head.

After the first two minutes are up, give yourself an additional two minutes to make any changes necessary for you to feel satisfied with your statement of goals at this early, general level.

**The Second Lifetime Question:** When you list lifetime goals quickly and without much reflection, you probably include a number of generalities such as "happiness," "success," "achievement," "love," "making a contribution to society," and the like. You can pin point your goals better by now asking a second question, "How would I like to spend the next three years?" Write that question at the top of the second sheet of paper. Again list your answers as quickly as you can for two minutes, then take another two minutes to include whatever you may have missed the first time around on this question.
**The Third Lifetime Question:** Now, for a different perspective, write down this third question on a third sheet of paper: "If I knew now I would be struck dead by lightning six months from today, how would I live until then?" (This means that you'd have only six months to live and would have to squeeze whatever you consider important into your dramatically reduced time on earth. Before you start listing, assume that everything relating to your death has been attended to. You have completed your will, bought a cemetery plot, and the like. Your answer to the question should concentrate on how you would live these last six months.

**Working Further On All Three Questions.** Now spend an additional two minutes (minimum) reviewing and improving your goals statements in answering all three questions. You may spend longer if you wish.

In looking over all three sets of answers you may have found that the answers to question 2 were an extension of question 1, and this is desirable. Some people also find question 3 (the six-months question) a continuation of the previous two, but others are jarred into sharp departures from their previous plans because of the sudden realization that their time is limited.

Now you have a list of goals. But you have probably thought of more to do than there is time to do it in. This lack of time creates goal conflicts.

**How to Resolve Goal Conflicts:** Goal conflicts are resolved by setting priorities. You must decide which goals are most important to you at this time.

**How to Set Lifetime Priorities:** Take your Lifetime Goals list (the first list you wrote) in hand and spend one minute selecting your top three goals from this list. Label the most important of these A-1. The second most important is A-2. The third is A-3. Do the same for your three-years list (label them B-1, B-2, and B-3), and your six-months list (label them C-1, C-2, and C-3).

At this point, you have nine goals culled from the three lists. To pick out the three most important long-term goals of the nine, write on a fresh piece of paper, "My three most important long term goals are..." Then write them in order: 1st, 2nd, 3rd. You have now finished a preliminary Lifetime Goals Statement. You have zeroed in on just what it is you want to do with your life as you see it at this time.

This exercise only establishes your goals as you see them today. These goals will change. Some people like to update their goals annually (in place of new year resolutions). Others like to do the exercise whenever they have a major job change, lifestyle change (i.e. the youngest family member just left for college) or whenever they are faced with a major decision involving their lives.

After you complete the exercise you need to put your goals in a place where you will find them frequently. Your appointment book, bulletin board, or billfold are likely places.
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Were you surprised at the lifetime priorities that you set?

2. Do you spend a lot of time on activities that do not help you meet your lifetime goals?

3. Should you cut out some of your present activities?

4. Should you spend more time on certain lifetime goals in the near future?

RESOURCE FOR FURTHER STUDY

A great way of involving others in an organization is through committees. This module will look at some reasons for committees and how to form useful committees.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the time you finish this module you should be able to:

1. List five reasons for using committees in your organization.
2. Describe how to form committees.

**ADVANTAGES OF STRONG COMMITTEES**

There are many good reasons for appointing a committee:
- It is a way to help new members get acquainted.
- It is a way to insure democracy.
- It can spread the work among more members.
- More ideas can be generated when more people are involved.
- Members feel better about their organization when they are involved as opposed to when the officers decide everything.
- People are more willing to work on projects when they have been involved in the planning.

**DON'T USE THIS APPROACH**

One common approach to forming a committee is the "call for volunteers" through mass media or by making an announcement at a public meeting. That may work in some cases where the job at hand requires only enthusiasm (i.e., clean-up after the meeting). One problem with this approach, however, is that the same people tend to volunteer time after time. Some of these compulsive volunteers are also famous for forgetting their commitments.

**HOW TO FORM A COMMITTEE**

For important (most) committees, use the following approach:

1. Write down the job that the committee is to do, including a deadline for when it should be done.
2. Make a list of the skills, knowledge, experience, viewpoints, special interests, resources, that need to be represented on the committee.
3. Choose individuals who have the skills, knowledge, etc., listed in 2 above. Also consider:

* Individuals personally interested in the issue or concern under consideration.
* Individuals who will communicate with others in the organization and who will continue to do so during the time they serve on the committee.
* Individuals with a positive attitude and enthusiasm.
* Individuals able to work with others.
* Someone dependable to call and conduct meetings.
* Someone who hasn't been very active recently, but might enjoy working on this committee.
* Look for diversity and complementarity (don't appoint 5 clones; but avoid forming a committee that cannot work together).

4. Contact each of the individuals chosen; tell them why they were chosen (use information from steps 2 and 3). Ask them if they will serve (give them some time to think about it if they are hesitant).

5. Once the committee is formed, see that all members know

* What is the committee's job (in writing),
* Who is chairing the committee, and
* The time, date, and place of the first meeting.

6. Check back with the Chair to see that the committee is making progress and is ready to report when appropriate.

Due to their small size, usually three to seven members, committees are easier to convene and are more flexible in their ability to gather information, consult with outside experts, and perform the tasks assigned them.

The committee's charge, what it is expected to do and when it is to be finished, along with the committee's powers and operating budget, should be clearly spelled out, preferably in writing. Be specific. Vague, hastily conceived, indefinite task assignments are the prime cause of committee failure.

EXERCISE: INVOLVEMENT THROUGH COMMITTEES

Choose an activity which your organization will need to plan and implement in the coming year. It should be an activity which could be delegated to a committee for further study, planning or accomplishment. Complete steps 1, 2, and 3 (above). Share your idea with an officer of the organization or with the executive committee (all of the officers). At the next regular meeting of your organization, if appropriate, complete steps 4 and 5. After that meeting, do step 6.

EXERCISE:

Some organizations regularly ask new members which committees they would like to join. This practice provides an excellent orientation to new members concerning the organization. It is a way to recruit potential committee members at a time when their interest is at its highest.

Design a page or half page form which lists all of the committees (or potential committees) for your organization and briefly tells the duties of that committee. If special qualifications or
limitations exist for a particular committee (i.e., the executive committee consists only of the elected officers) write those down so new members will not be misled.

CONCLUSIONS

When you recruit members to committees be certain that someone, preferably the chair of that committee, contacts the new member immediately. Nothing is more deflating to a person who agrees to serve on a committee then never hears from anyone again. Long delays in contacting members, or in holding the first meeting, result in loss of motivation and even anger.

One organization which maintained a very ambitious calendar of activities but had very little "burnout" operated under the following guideline for its membership: "Every member should have one job; no members should have more jobs than they really want."
A Toolkit for Volunteer Leaders

Leadership

Self Image L-7

Our best mirror is an old friend.

The ability to understand others—why they do the things they do—begins with an understanding of oneself.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

When you complete this module you should be able to:

1. Look at yourself with a fresh perspective.
2. Identify some excuses people use for refusing to change.
3. Get feedback on yourself.

LOOK AT YOURSELF

Take a good look at yourself. Get up in front of a mirror. Ask yourself these three questions:

- How did I get to be the person I am?
- What makes me do the things I do?
- Why do I react the way I do to different people, situations and things?

Honest answers to these three questions can give you tremendous insight into what motivates others.

STOP TRYING TO CHANGE OTHER PEOPLE

There is only one person in this world you have much control over. That person is yourself. Unfortunately each of us spends a lot of time trying to change and control others. And we use all kinds of negative tactics in doing so. We intimidate them. We exploit their feelings of obligation and guilt. We "parent" people in telling them what they "should" and "ought" to do. We play on people's egos. We exaggerate things out of proportion and make generalizations. We play on people's fears and prejudices. We exploit people's weak self esteem. But the fact is, YOU CAN'T FORCE ANYBODY TO DO ANYTHING, at least not for very long.

It just doesn't work. Look at yourself. What do you do when someone criticizes you and tells you what you "should" and "ought" to do, and tries to change you? You rebel. You say, "Heck if I'll do that," even if you agree with the advice.
Ironically the very people who spend so much time complaining about what others "should" or "shouldn't" do, take the attitude—with regard to themselves—that "I can't help what I am." Most people spend so much time and energy unsuccessfully trying to change and control the actions of others—that they come to wrongly believe that they cannot do the one thing that is most possible—to change or control their own thoughts and actions.

You are the only person in this world that you can realistically expect to change. Are you willing to change? You can't forcibly change others, but YOU CAN CHANGE YOURSELF, IF YOU WANT TO. Change is hard work. Thus many people resist it. Many people act like they are cement: thoroughly mixed up and firmly set.

HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR "PRIDE?" Is your pride more important than the well-being and progress of the total group? Do you have a "Well, that's the way I am" closed-mind attitude? Is your "ego" getting in the way?

Let's assume you are having difficulty with a particular person or group. Let's also assume that you are indeed "right" and they are "wrong." In SUCH a situation you have a right to be angry at them; you have a right to be upset; you have a right to ignore them; you have a right to complain; you have a right to point out to them their erroneous thinking; you have a right to tell them off. You have these "rights" if you want them. BUT WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO?

Have you ever changed your mind as a result of being told off or ridiculed? Has complaining to others ever corrected a situation? Letting off steam may help you vent your emotions for the time being, but it doesn't last long. Does resentment and anger ever do any good? Has "putting people in their place" ever helped?

The only thing that is going to make you feel better is to resolve the situation, improve the relationship, and show accomplishment. The most effective way of doing that is to start looking at your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. You have almost no control over the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of others.

THE JUSTICE TRAP

Dr. Wayne Dyer talks about the "JUSTICE TRAP." The "justice trap" is a very negative and destructive state that many of us get ourselves into. It takes many forms:

-We get into the Justice Trap when we lament, "It's not fair" or "They had no right to do that," and allow ourselves to become upset, angry and immobilized by someone else's "unjust" conduct. Unfortunately, there are a lot of things in this world that are "unfair," and getting upset about them doesn't help.

- We are in the Justice Trap when we wallow around in self-pity, feel sorry for ourselves, try to make others feel guilty for what they have done, demand apologies, and "quit speaking" to those who have wronged us.

- We are in the Justice Trap when we use "If he can do it, so can I!" to justify our own inappropriate behavior. Or we use "If they aren't going to do anything, neither am I!" as an excuse for doing nothing ourselves. Are you using "justice" as a scapegoat?

- We are in the Justice Trap when we "keep score," maintain a mental tally sheet of what we have done for others and they in turn for us.
- We are in the Justice Trap when we criticize, judge, and run others down behind their backs in order to feel smug about ourselves.

- We are in the Justice Trap when we practice vengeance, hold grudges, and try to get even.

**WHAT CAN WE DO TO GET OUT OF THE "JUSTICE TRAP? "**

- Ask yourself: "Will the injustice go away if I get upset and angry?"

- Realize that other people are different from you. "I respect your right to be different than I am, although I find your behavior hard to accept right now."

- Do nice things because you want to, rather than because you "ought" to, or because you owe somebody something.

- Set up and follow your own standard of conduct. Don't allow your actions to be influenced by what Tom, Dick and Harry do.

- Be a doer rather than a complainer. Stop all this "It's not fair" nonsense and do something to make your life fairer. Lamenting "Well, it shouldn't be" is never going to change anything.

- Realize that hard feelings, anger and revenge are just another way of allowing yourself to be controlled by others.

**FOCUS ON YOURSELF**

Here is something else to consider: YOU ARE TREATED BY OTHERS THE WAY YOU TEACH THEM TO TREAT YOU. Rather than thinking, "Why do they take advantage of me?", ask yourself, "What am I doing to teach (encourage) him to treat me this way?" Put the focus on you rather than on them. If you refuse to be manipulated by another, that person will stop trying to do so. For example: certain people will use their "hurt feelings" to control you as long as you are gullible enough to keep buying into it. Those people will stop having hurt feelings when they realize that those feelings can no longer be used to manipulate you. But don't expect people to give up their "victimizing" of you without a fight. They will use every trick they know to keep you under their control.

People often ask how you overcome "the same people having to do everything." Well in most cases, "the same people do everything" frankly because they want to. Many people like feeling sorry for themselves--like a martyr. Others don't know how to say "no."

Directly related to the above statement is the SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY. People become how you treat them. A person will remain (unresponsible, troublemaker, etc.) as long as you view and treat him/her that way.

In conclusion, FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON WHAT YOU CAN DO rather than on what others "ought" to do. Stop blaming "others" and start taking responsibility for your own actions and reactions to others. GIVE UP YOUR EXCUSES. Frankly ask the question, "How am I contributing, through my action or inaction, to the difficulties the group is experiencing." When you are up against a bad situation, you have only two real options: either quit or learn a new way to cope with it.
Have you ever noticed who the person is that's always around when you are having problems? YOU. It's up to you. Are you going to go back to blaming others? Are you going back to scapegoating? Or are you going to start looking at yourself?

EXERCISE: GETTING FEEDBACK ON YOURSELF

The purpose of this exercise is to get information from someone else. The information you need is how they see your behavior.

Sometimes we are unable to see our own problem behaviors without help. The quality of that help will depend on three factors:

1. How well (precise) you ask for feedback;  
2. The ability of the person helping you; and  
3. How well (open - appreciative) you respond to the feedback.

Form a pair with someone who knows you well. Pick someone who has seen you work in a particular organization or group for several months. If you cannot form such a pair, skip to the optional instructions at the end of this exercise.

Each member of the pair answers, in writing, the following two questions about the other member of the pair:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. What are 2-3 contributions that (partner's name) makes to his/her organization?</th>
<th>2. What are 2-3 improvements that s/he could make to strengthen his/her leadership in the organization?</th>
<th>3. Areas to Consider:</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Discussion Skills</td>
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After both members of the pair are done writing (5 minutes maximum), share answers with the partner. Start with the "contributions", then move on to "improvements." For each suggested improvement, both partners should write, on the back, specific actions to be taken to make the improvements. The person to whom the improvements are directed will select at least one and agree to try the specific actions listed.
Optional Instructions for working alone:

Complete the questions above, but do not limit yourself to only 2-3 "contributions" or "improvements." For each improvement that you write down on the front, write (on the back) specific actions you can take to make the improvement.

Next time you are able, find a partner who knows you well and have that partner complete the questions for you. Are your partner's answers the same as yours? Write specific actions that you can take for any "new" improvement that your partner has suggested.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Can we help other individuals improve their self image? If no, why not? If yes, how?

2. Is self image really a key to whether or not youth get involved with drugs, violence, dropping out of school, conflicts with family and others?

3. Can community organizations help groups of people improve their self image or can this only work person to person?

4. What are some successful programs that build positive self image? How are they successful? What specifically do they do?

5. What are some programs that have successfully "turned around" individuals with problem behavior resulting, in part, from negative self image? What do they do to accomplish change?

6. What can you do to support organizations and programs in your community that help with self image?

RESOURCE FOR FURTHER STUDY

Mentoring means guiding or coaching another person, one-on-one, to learn a specific skill or task. Many organizations use mentoring as a key element in new worker orientation. In this case the task is to learn about the organization and to adapt to the new job successfully. Sometimes mentoring is used when a volunteer is asked to do a new job or expresses lack of confidence in some phase of the assigned work.

*Before starting this module, complete (or review) the modules on leadership styles (L-1), listening (C-2), coaching (part of M-2, implementing a plan), interpersonal communication (C-1), and recognition (V-8).*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After completing this module you should be able to:

1. Describe a process of 5 stages for mentoring.
2. Describe characteristics of a helpful mentor.
3. Develop a successful mentoring relationship.

**STAGES OF MENTORING**

1. Identify the need for mentoring. This may be done by the mentor, the one to be mentored, or a third person (usually a supervisor).

2. Make a tentative agreement. The mentor and the one to be mentored must accept the need for the relationship, the task to be learned, and the approximate time involved (both the length of the relationship and frequency of meeting).

3. Explore various possibilities for the mentoring relationship. Listen to each other. Raise questions. Discuss alternative activities to complete the learning task.

4. Develop a preliminary plan which includes a goal and the first steps of accomplishing the learning task.

5. Implement the plan. Take the first step. Consult with each other and discuss successes, doubts, and next steps.

6. Revise and extend the plan based on feedback and discussion. The mentor may use democratic or indirect leadership during this phase. Seldom will directive leadership be appropriate.

7. Repeat steps 5 and 6 until the task is complete according to both the mentor and the learner.
CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORS

They listen to assess the learner's strengths and needs.
They raise questions and suggest alternatives.
They are patient and thoughtful.
They suggest key people to contact or learning resources to help the learner.
They use reflective listening to clarify the learner's point of view.
They do not jump to solutions too quickly.
They support, encourage and praise the learner.
They are clear when describing steps in the learning process.
They break complex activities into small, easy to understand steps.
They never take over complete responsibility for the learning.
Sometimes they demonstrate and/or model a desired skill or behavior.
They understand that every individual and situation are different.

EXERCISE:

Since you are studying this module you may already have a need for mentoring. If not, wait until you have a situation where you need mentoring, or create one. Learning a new teaching technique is an excellent opportunity for a mentoring relationship (see modules on specific learning/teaching techniques).

So do it! Follow the process through the seven stages to develop a mentoring relationship and learn a new task. As you follow the process be sure to share this information with your mentor so that person knows exactly what you are expecting from the relationship.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Did the mentoring process work for you?
Did you choose (or were you assigned) a compatible mentor?
Was the learning task appropriate for a mentoring relationship?
What went right?
What did not go right?
How would you change the process or the relationship next time?
Can you add any items to the list of “characteristics of successful mentors?”
Decision making is similar for individuals and groups but there are some key differences. This module will look at both.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the time you finish this module you should be able to:

1. Describe a decision making process for yourself.
2. Identify advantages a consensus decision making over other techniques.
3. Describe how to lead a group in consensus decision making.

DECISION MAKING FOR INDIVIDUALS

Individuals who have learned effective decision making usually follow a process even if it is done unconsciously. Review the following steps to see if this is how you make difficult decisions.

1. Get as much information as time and sources will allow.
2. Break down the complex issues into smaller, clearer facts and opinions.
3. List alternative solutions along with pros and cons for each alternative.
4. Consult trusted colleagues -- get their insights into the alternatives, pros, and cons.
5. Sleep on it, if possible.
6. Make the best decision available. Do what is right.
7. Stand behind the decision -- give it a chance.
8. Be prepared to admit mistakes and learn from them.
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do the eight steps above fit your experience in making difficult decisions?

2. Can you improve the steps (expand, simplify, or make them more pertinent to your own situation)?

3. How does your organization make decisions?

4. Does the organization use different techniques for large formal meetings than for small committee or study group meetings?

5. How do you feel when you are on the losing side of a majority vote?

6. How do you feel when you find that one of the leaders has already made a decision for your organization without open discussion?

EXERCISE:

From the answers to the questions above you have identified several ways in which decisions are made. Make a list of these ways. Your list should include at least the following: 1) individual decisions for oneself; 2) individual decisions for the group (unilateral decisions); and 3) majority vote. Module L-4 describes two other techniques on pages 21 and 22. These are the study committee and negative voting. All of these techniques have their disadvantages when used by a group to make a difficult decision. Add some of the disadvantages to your list.

CONSENSUS

Another way to make decisions is by consensus. This technique is sometimes dismissed because it is misunderstood or because groups do not feel they have the time or skill to reach consensus. Consensus development is an important skill in team building. Decisions reached through consensus are generally more actively supported than those made through majority vote. When a consensus building process is used, people tend to feel more a part of the decision and in turn take greater responsibility for it. The calling for a vote, on the other hand, can polarize a group. Much time is spent arguing the pros and cons of the motion, keeping participants from seeking alternative courses of action that might be mutually more agreeable.

While we often expound the value of consensus, we rarely use it. WHY? (1) Most people are confused as to what is meant by consensus. They mistake consensus with changing people's minds—getting everyone to agree and go along with a proposed action. (2) Many people lack skills in facilitating the development of consensus. As a result, meetings tend to ramble when consensus is called for, and limited progress is made.

(3) There are individuals who would rather dominate a group than listen and learn from the opinions and suggestions of others. They use their powerful personalities, verbal skills and parliamentary procedure to influence and control the group. (4) We have been indoctrinated into believing that voting (majority rule) and Robert's Rules of Order are the only democratic way to involve group members in the decision-making process. Tradition keeps groups from trying other, more productive methods.
**What Is Consensus**

Consensus is agreeing to work together until the group can find a solution that everyone feels good about—without compromising anyone’s strong convictions or concerns. Consensus means being willing to modify your proposal, your suggestions, what you feel should be done, in order to incorporate the views and suggestions of others. It often means combining diverse opinions into a mutually acceptable course of action. Consensus involves postponing “the making of a motion” until all have had a chance to express themselves on the issue, and various possible solutions have been identified. It involves modifying the solutions proposed and searching for other alternatives that might be more agreeable to everyone.

Consensus is developed by listening to others, showing empathy and respect, valuing their thoughts and concerns. Group decisions sometimes take longer to make when developed through consensus, but such decisions usually require less prodding of group members in ensuring follow-through than do decisions made through majority vote. In most cases, if done properly, consensus takes no more time than majority vote. People tend to be cooperative when encouraged to do so.

Note: It is not the intent of this discussion to conclude that all decisions would be better made through consensus. Majority vote is quite appropriate for routine and less important decisions, particularly where little commitment or follow-through is required of the voters. A vote is also useful in formalizing a decision once consensus has been reached.

**FACILITATING CONSENSUS**

The following techniques can be helpful in facilitating consensus within a group:

**Explain to the group the meaning and value of consensus.** Make use of the preceding paragraphs. Explain the benefits of consensus development in terms of stronger commitment and follow-up.

**Clarify the problem/need/concern.** Take time for all who wish to voice their concern and interests on the issue under discussion. The chair/discussion leader should summarize each person's comments. This clearly demonstrates that the person has been heard. Such paraphrasing also tends to reduce repetition and control any tendency to ramble. For consensus to develop, people must feel they have been listened to and understood. An alternative would be to go around the room and have each person in turn briefly express his or her concerns or suggestions on the issue before the group. Avoid discussing possible solutions until consensus has first been reached on the nature of the problem, need, or concern.

**Modified Brainstorm.** Conduct a brief brainstorming session to generate a list of alternative solutions. Make a list of these suggestions, preferably on newsprint or a blackboard for all to see. An essential ground rule in brainstorming is no discussion, except for questions of clarification. Postpone any discussion of pros and cons of the alternatives presented until all ideas and suggestions have been heard. Premature debate keeps many good ideas from being shared. Listen, and show you value each person's input.

**Break down into small groups for debate.** It is physically impossible for everyone to be heard and to be personally involved in deciding an issue when the group is larger than ten. Instead, briefly break into smaller groups of six to ten and have each discuss the question before the
group. After the designated time, have each small group briefly report recommendations. A brief joint summary session is usually all that is then necessary to identify consensus and work out any differences among the small groups.

**Set a time limit.** For example, "let's take the next twenty minutes to discuss and decide on the action(s) we wish to take." Periodically remind the group of the amount of time left. Time limits usually increase group productivity. A time limit of fifteen to thirty minutes is suggested, depending on the magnitude of the question under discussion. Don't, however, force a group to make a decision before it is ready. Encourage the group to discuss and modify the proposed alternatives until one is found that is acceptable to all.

**The chairperson or discussion leader actively "facilitates" discussion.** The chair/discussion leader can effectively facilitate consensus only by remaining neutral and not participating in (or trying to influence) the content of the discussion. It is the chair's responsibility to ensure an open and balanced conversation flow in which everyone has an equal opportunity for expression, with no one dominating. The chair should protect participants from put-downs and intimidation.

The chair/discussion leader can further facilitate consensus by "reading" the group, by sensing the mood of the group, by observing the group's reactions, e.g., "From the discussion there seems to be a lot of interest in.... Am I reading the group right?" "There appears to be (appears not to be) consensus on...." Helping the group to openly acknowledge areas of agreement and disagreement speeds up consensus development. If someone appears reluctant, uninterested or opposed, the leader asks that person's opinion, e.g., "Bob, how do you feel about this?"

**Focus on areas of agreement.** When a group gets bogged down arguing over differences, jump in with, "It seems we lack consensus on.... Let's move on to areas of greater mutual concern." Don't allow differences within the group to overshadow areas of accord. This does not mean that the area of disagreement should be covered up and forgotten; it just means that the group is not yet ready to take action in that area. You might later wish to go back to the area of disagreement, after an appropriate break. Consensus development is not a process for working out strong differences, or of getting others to think like you do. It rather is a group process for identifying those areas in which there is sufficient common interest to take action.

**If you have difficulty forming consensus, try "negative voting."**[3] Once a list of suggestions or alternatives has been generated through brainstorming, review each item, asking "Let's have a show of hands as to who could not go along with proposal A. Okay, proposal B. Raise your hand if B is not acceptable to you." Etc. Then go back to the proposal which had the least opposition. Ask the dissenting individuals to express their reasons for opposing it. Ask the group as a whole to generate changes that might satisfy one or all of the dissenters. Then ask if everyone else can live with these changes. Raise other alternatives, e.g., "Have you thought about...?" "Would it be more acceptable if...?" Protect individuals from being coerced by the rest of the group. Work to turn objections into positive alternatives.

In conclusion, consensus development can be effectively used in many types of group decisions—from goal setting to problem resolution to the initiation of group action. While reaching consensus may not be necessary in all situations, it becomes particularly important in making major group decisions where some sort of commitment and follow-through are expected of the group members/participants. The process of consensus building can strengthen personal commitment, better ensure follow-through, develop team spirit, and create a positive working climate within the group.
EXERCISE:

Now try it! Anticipate a situation when your group will be required to make a decision. Prepare notes that will help you introduce the idea of consensus decision making and lead the group through the process. Ask a colleague to observe the process and give you feedback after the meeting.
PREPARATION

1. Were advance contacts made? Were pre-visits made where needed?
2. Were transportation arrangements satisfactory and cost effective?
3. Were the participants thoroughly oriented as to purpose, schedule, their responsibilities on the tour and necessary background information? Was a tour guide prepared?
4. Were plans confirmed in writing with hosts, resource people, and those responsible for logistics (transportation, meals, etc.)?
5. Was needed equipment secured?
6. Was the tour guide well prepared?
7. Was insurance in order.
8. Were liability issues considered? Arrangements made?
9. Was publicity appropriate?

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Did the participants know what to look for? Did they ask meaningful questions?
2. Were directions given on how to make useful observations? Did the participants make those observations?
3. Was the group well organized and supervised during the visits?
4. Was opportunity provided for active learning (i.e. practice)?
5. Did participants take notes for future reference?
6. Was group discussion led at appropriate times?
7. Were conclusions drawn from the discussion?
8. Were proper courtesy and appreciation shown toward the hosts and resource people?
9. Would another learning/teaching technique have been more effective instead of this tour?

FOLLOW-UP

1. Has a note of appreciation been sent to the hosts?
2. Were participants debriefed at the end of the tour or during a subsequent meeting to summarize observations and applications?
3. Were participants involved in evaluating the tour?