

Group dynamics in psychology



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In my social group, it is clear that we are a collection of individuals guided by roles and norms. We, as friends, clearly influence each other, satisfy personal needs through association, and could be classified as a unit due to our common relation and degree of similarity. I also notice a great degree of interdependence. That is, events affecting one Work- Contrastingly, in my work group, I don't find as much similarity and personal need fulfillment. In this group, I observe a greater emphasis on goal achievement.

At work, we achieve goals that we would otherwise be unable to accomplish individually. I also recognize a sense of interdependence as we are all affected by changes involving any single employee. a) Positive Interdependence Social: In my social group for example, we often help one another such that we are able to accomplish group goals and wants. I remember one incident in high school wherein one of "our" friends had to paint his outside decking before he was able to do anything of leisure.

Because we had made group plans, we all went over and helped with the painting. Had we not helped, we would not have achieved the group experience that we all wanted. Work: Because my work group is more goal oriented, positive interdependence plays a greater role in this context. For example, at work we all have different tasks that we must accomplish. I usually work the sales floor, write up sales and oversee operations while the other guys might be out delivering merchandise or unloading shipments from our distributors.

We are all interdependent upon one another such that we are able to run a successful business. Our personal responsibilities exist only when all

individuals accomplish their given tasks. Individual Accountability/ Social: Often times we, as a social group, make group plans. Personal Responsibility. For example, we recently planned a road trip during Spring Break and each of us took a role in the planning. We each had a different job so to speak.

One would map out the trip. Another would gather recreational information about our specific stops. Another would locate motels at the stopping points and so on. From time to time we all shared our findings. We were held accountable by the group for our respective jobs. This accountability, I believe, increased each member's sense of responsibility.

The ought factor was at work here. Work: As previously mentioned, at work, we all have our specific jobs as delegated by our boss. In this forum the structure is much more formal. We are held accountable, minute by minute, for the successful completion of our specific tasks. Again, this in turn increases personal responsibility as we are constantly being evaluated.

It is interesting to notice the increased tension in this environment, as the consequences for not carrying out one's tasks successfully are far more extreme than the peer pressure that might exist within a social group. c)

Promotive (Face-to Face) Social: Many times in the social realm, encouragement and Interaction positive feedback are necessary to complete goals. For example, as previously mentioned we as a group are planning a road trip during Spring Break. Often times when someone is neglecting their particular responsibilities I will encourage them and attempt to facilitate their task completion. It may be something as small as

reminding them of great time that lies ahead but nevertheless, encouraging as it promotes the completion of the group goal.

Work: At work, many times when it is just “ us” there, that is, all the guys without the boss, accomplishing the group tasks become difficult. After all, we lack the pressure there that normally drives us. It is ironic that these are usually the days when we seem to get huge shipments for stock and where housing not to mention the many customers in the store. I often attempt to encourage the group by increasing the energy level.

It sounds simplistic, yes but by unloading the trucks and by stocking the store myself with high energy, I can create an atmosphere where the energy level is so high that we almost enjoy the work. I often remind the group of the relaxation that will follow the completion of the task. Any method of encouragement that I can think of I will use in these circumstances. A little unspoken competition among a group of guys never hurts either!! d) Social Skills Social: I notice that I tend to spend most of my time with people uncannily like me. Coincidence? I don't so, but in any event, we all seem to have the same level of social skills. That is to say that we were all instilled with similar values in this area, and we treat others (outgroups) and each other in respectable ways.

I believe that our high level of social skills make us stand out as a group. For example, even the service that we may receive when we go to a restaurant is superior (I believe) because of the social skills we, as a group, possess. I believe that our personal relationships are healthier due to adequate social skills as well. After all, we as people like to be treated respectfully and when

that respect is there, relationships and tasks are much more fulfilling. Work: As a leader at work, I am always careful to treat everyone with respect and equality (an important aspect of high social skills).

When employees feel as though they are respected, they seem to work ten times harder to accomplish a group or individual tasks. Without respect, employees often develop an anger against the system. This is an extremely poor social context under which tasks should be carried out. Productivity seems to crash along with esteem.) Group Processing Social:

Often this process of group processing occurs at an unspoken level in my social group (that is to say we never really seem to sit down and discuss which actions are helpful and non helpful to the long term effectiveness of our group). However in the event of conflict, we have discussed appropriate and in-appropriate behaviors.

One might say to another " If we are going to stay friends, you simply cannot betray my trust like that" and so on. This in effect feedback as to what behaviors promote or inhibit the effectiveness of the social group. effective. In this way, we are being told as to which actions are productive or counter-productive when attempting to execute a group task.

We are then able to discuss different strategies that may be more effective for the completion of the task at hand. Put the rules or guidelines for constructive controversy in your own words, using one or two word phrases, and list them here. (b) Might any of these be useful to apply in your social or work group as noted above? Please describe how. 1. Concentrate on togetherness in decision making.

2. Promote positive controversy. 3. Defend your position well. 4.

Be strong in convictions but flexible too. . Encourage others to fight their cases with strong conviction. 6. Listen to and challenge opposition. 7.

Don't take opposition personally. 8. Ensure discussion and re discussion. It seems as though my best friends are those with whom I have argued with the most!! When put into practice, these guidelines can improve relationships, group oriented tasks etc. In my experience, differences that were once a threat to personal relationships have turned out to be strengths, but only after an open forum of discussion. For me, the most important of the 8 guidelines is to not take opposition personally.

Accepting others views as simply their views is extremely important in the maintenance of healthy relationships. The free rider effect, the sucker effect and the rich-get-richer effect have all shown up in my life at different times. I recall many times as a child when my dad came home with the weekly shopping. It seemed like a hundred bags that he brought in the house.

It was always a family job to help unpack the bags and put the groceries away. I remember many times going to the bathroom and making like I was using the restroom until most of the work was done! The free rider effect in action. Once my sister and parents caught on to my little game they may have slowed the process of putting the groceries such that I would have a fair share to do when I came out. This is an example of the sucker effect.

Changing subjects a bit, I remember an employee at work that would constantly talk negatively about the other employees to the boss. while attempting to be the model employee.

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This guy was wrapped up in the rich-get-richer effect. He was attempting to become a leader and gain status at the expense of the other employees.

Clear and operational group goals help communication among members as well as between in-group members and other out-groups. Secondly, these types of goals guide the group in planning and carrying out tasks. Finally, these types of goals enable the group to evaluate both the group process and the group outcome or product.

I belong to a National service group here on campus and as a group we have activities and tasks that we must carry out. Recently we worked at San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens. Our clear and operational goals were set before we even started the project. We as a group communicated with the leaders of the Botanical Gardens to find out exactly what we needed to accomplish, we were therefore able to plan and carry out the task, and finally we were able to compare the end product with the initial goal that we had in mind.

Oh, by the way we did a long hard day of work and labelled it a success.

Studies indicate that under most conditions, cooperative groups are more effective in task completion than competitive or individualistic efforts.

However, some evidence suggests that on very simple repetitive tasks, competition may produce higher achievement. At work I usually notice that cooperative efforts prove to be the most effective, as many of the tasks could not even be accomplished individually (such as unloading trucks, stocking etc.) However, sometimes competition drives me, as in sports for example. When my friends and I go snow skiing there is usually an underlying competition (who can do the most elaborate jump etc.

) I believe that this competition has actually made me a better skier. I do agree that group efforts are much more powerful in most cases, however in tasks that put us as individuals in the “ limelight”, competition may be the necessary driving force for success. I believe that my ability to deal with people is directly proportional to my success in both personal relationships, professional relationships and overall happiness. Success in these areas are of utmost importance to me, therefore my ability to deal with people also becomes of utmost importance. I generally like people and like to interact with as many people as possible. I believe that I have something to offer every person that I meet and I also believe that every person I meet has something to offer me.

I think that most people feel as though I like them, and because of that I think that people are likely to let down their defenses when they are around me. I believe that much of my success in the workplace and in the social realm is directly related to this way I live my life. People are much more helpful to those people whom they like. I sometimes become over self conscious when entering a relationship wherein I am at risk of being emotionally hurt.

In these situations I find it hard to act naturally. My ability to find the things that I have to offer others becomes cloudy because of the tension that I experience. I would like to work on relaxation exercises to improve this area of my social interactions. The fundamental question that led and leads research in the area of group dynamics is “ What change in an individual’s normal solitary performance occurs when other people are present”?

Norman Triplett conducted research in an attempt to answer this very

question. Triplett observed that cyclists' times were faster when they were racing against each other than when they were simply racing against a clock.

He therefore hypothesized that the presence of other people act as a stimulant to the performer. A second line of research presented by Kurt Lewin emphasizes the performance of groups as compared to individuals. Overall, the results indicate that groups are more productive than individuals. Kurt Lewin maintained that the behavior of individuals should be understood in terms of the nature of the groups to which they belong. 1.

Members create clear group goals relevant to needs, emphasize positive interdependence, and evoke commitment from members. Goals are necessary if a group is to reach some desired outcome and without positive interdependence, the group's force is significantly reduced. It is this interdependence that gives rise to higher group productivity as compared to individualistic efforts. If members are required to commit to the group, cohesiveness increases and the group is much more likely to remain intact and continue to work together. 2.

Group members communicate their ideas and feelings accurately and clearly. Without effective two-way communication, productivity of the group is significantly decreased as potential outcomes are not understood by all members and valuable ideas may go unrecognized. 3. All members actively participate and provide leadership so that it is distributed among members. It is important that there is not an over-dominating force in a group. If all members feel as though they are equal, more ideas are likely to be shared and challenged.

4. Members influence each other on the basis of expertise, ability, and access to information, not on authority. Therefore, power is equally distributed throughout the group. All challenges to others' ideas should be based on valid information and logical concepts so as to avoid the struggle for power and authority.

When power is unequally distributed, group members are likely to develop hostile feelings and are less likely to share potentially constructive ideas. 5. Members flexibly match decision-making procedures with the needs of the situation. Flexibility is the key to success in many situations.

Situations differ and therefore so must strategies for decision making. If too rigid a system is in effect, free flowing ideas will be stifled and productivity will inevitably decrease. 6. Members engage in controversy by disagreeing and challenging each other's conclusions and reasoning, thus promoting creative decision making and problem solving. Controversy is necessary to avoid groupthink. Productive conflict and controversy promotes the reevaluation of ideas that might need revision.

. Members face their conflicts and resolve them in constructive ways. It is important that members avoid personal attacks and keep focused on the ideas being presented. Attacking people will lead to unconstructive conflict whereas a disagreement regarding a previously presented concept can lead to reevaluation and possible resolution. It is also important that all group members keep in mind that conflicting ideas do not translate into personal attacks.

10. Discuss the importance of action theory and learning to Group Dynamics (in your own words). How can your learning experience be enhanced by your behavior? In order to be an effective contributor to a group, one must be aware of the consequences of their various behaviors. In addition, one must have a well established set of action theories from which to choose when attempting to reach a desired outcome. Furthermore in order to ensure group success, individuals must be able to recognize when behavior becomes ineffective such that action theories can be modified. This learning process can be enhanced by the willingness to take risks and experiment with different behaviors.

As Herbert Otto said " Change and growth take place when a person has risked himself and dares to become involved with experimenting with his own life". Bibliography: Psychology Group Dynamics Psy 351 Psy 351 Group Dynamics Social- In my social group, it is clear that we are a collection of individuals guided by roles norms. We, as friends, clearly influence each other, satisfy personal needs through association, and could be classified as a unit due to our common relation and degree of similarity. I also notice a great degree of interdependence. That is, events affecting one tend to affect us all in some way or another. Work- Contrastingly, in my work group, I don't find as much similarity and personal need fulfillment.

In this group, I observe a greater emphasis on goal achievement. At work, we achieve goals that we would otherwise be unable to accomplish individually. I also recognize a sense of interdependence as we are all affected by changes involving any single employee. Positive Interdependence Social: In my social group for example, we often help one
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