

Models of Small Group Development

Chapter 5



Group Development

Life span approach

Groups have a beginning, a growing stage, and an ending



Group Development

The exploration of events

Groups experience multiple events (some of which happen simultaneously) that impact their developmental process



Group Development



Factors influence group development

History

Members build a group history of working together

Group Development



Group maturity

The ability and willingness a group possesses as it moves through the developmental process

Ability

Describes a group's collective knowledge, skills, and experience

Willingness

Refers to a group's collective motivation and confidence

Developmental Models



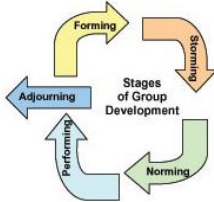
Three approaches: Tuckman,
Gersick, & Poole

Tuckman's Five Phase Model



Definition

A linear model of group development that covers group structure (i.e., relationship patterns) and task behavior (i.e., what the group is working on)



Tuckman's Five Phase Model



Forming phase

Occurs when members come to the group concerned about individual goals

Storming phase

Occurs when members develop relationships and the group process begins. Small amounts of conflict may occur

Tuckman's Five Phase Model



Norming phase

Occurs when members work together on the task and attempt to get along



Tuckman's Five Phase Model



Performing phase

Occurs when members ready task for output and evaluation by an external audience

Adjourning phase

Occurs when members reach the end of their involvement together and/or has finished its task

Gersick's Punctuated Equilibrium Model

Based on the belief that not all groups develop in a sequential manner



Gersick's Punctuated Equilibrium Model



Definition

Groups progress through a period of inertia which is punctuated by a period of concentrated change and time is the defining characteristic around which group development occurs

Gersick's Punctuated Equilibrium Model



Phase one

During this meeting, members set the precedent for how the group will approach task accomplishment and little work is accomplished

Transition (midpoint)

The group members realize they have used or wasted half of their time and now must determine how to accomplish the task

Gersick's Punctuated Equilibrium Model



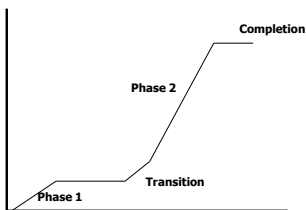
Phase Two

Much more work is accomplished than in Phase one, although group members do not possess the urgency to finish their task

Completion

During the final meeting, members realize the group must absolutely finish the task.

Gersick's Punctuated Equilibrium Model



Poole's Multiple Sequence Model



Poole's Multiple Sequence Model



Definition

Considers that groups do not always follow a rigid, phase-like approach but rather, groups engage in three types of activity tracks that do not necessarily follow in a logical sequence

Poole's Multiple Sequence Model



First activity track is task process

Occurs when members analyze the task by using various decision-making and problem solving procedures

Second activity track is relational

Occurs when members engage in behaviors that promote member relationships

Poole's Multiple Sequence Model



Third activity track is topical focus

Occurs when members concern themselves with the major issues or themes that emerge at any given point in the group's work that become agenda items

Poole's Multiple Sequence Model



At any point, a group will alternate among the three activity tracks. A switch from one activity track to another activity track is known as a **breakpoint**

Three types of breakpoints

1. Normal breakpoint: shift in focus
2. Delay breakpoint: reexamine a position
3. Disruption breakpoint: conflict arise

Characteristics of Group Development



Characteristics of Group Development



Five characteristics reflect group development

1. How cohesive is the group?
2. Does the group engage in depersonalizing conflict?
3. How does the group balance its task and socioemotional needs?
4. How does the group communicate?
5. What is the level of group efficacy?

A Final Note



Rather than focusing on which model of group development is the more superior model, consider that each model explains, to some degree, the way any group develops
