

An Effective Group



How we recognise "an effective group"

The effective group:

- Has a clear understanding of its goals.
- Is flexible in selecting its procedures as it works towards its goals.
- Has achieved a high standard of communication and understanding among its members. Has communication of personal feelings and attitudes, as well as ideas, occurring in a direct and open fashion.
- Achieves an appropriate balance between achievement of tasks and the satisfaction of individual needs.
- Provides for sharing of leadership responsibilities by group members, so that all members are concerned about contributing ideas, clarifying the ideas of others, giving opinions, testing the feasibility of potential decisions, and in their ways helping the group to work on its task and maintain itself as an effective working unit.
- Has a high degree of cohesiveness (attractiveness for the members) but not to the point of stifling the individual's freedom.
- Makes intelligent use of the differing abilities of its members.
- Is not dominated by a leader or by any of its members.
- Can be objective about reviewing its own processes. It can face its problems and adjust to modifications needed in its operation.

- Maintains a balance between emotional and rational behaviour.

Helping groups to be effective

- Encourage their interdependence; help them to be responsible for their own life. They will need help and guidance - give it when it is needed in an unobtrusive way. Refrain from telling them what they ought to do, e.g. instead say "Have you considered this or that?", "What are the advantages or disadvantages of each?", etc.
- Listen to the group. Note what it says and compare what it does (the two may be different). Keep a finger on its pulse.
- Encourage all members to be involved, promote shared leadership and shared responsibility.
- Allow for differences of opinion which can often be the basis of real commitment to the group.
- Encourage personal grievances to be aired and resolved.
- Encourage members to be themselves; and the group to accept differences to their mutual benefit.
- Ensure that problems to be solved are those which are of concern to the members.
- Encourage the group to make its own decisions.