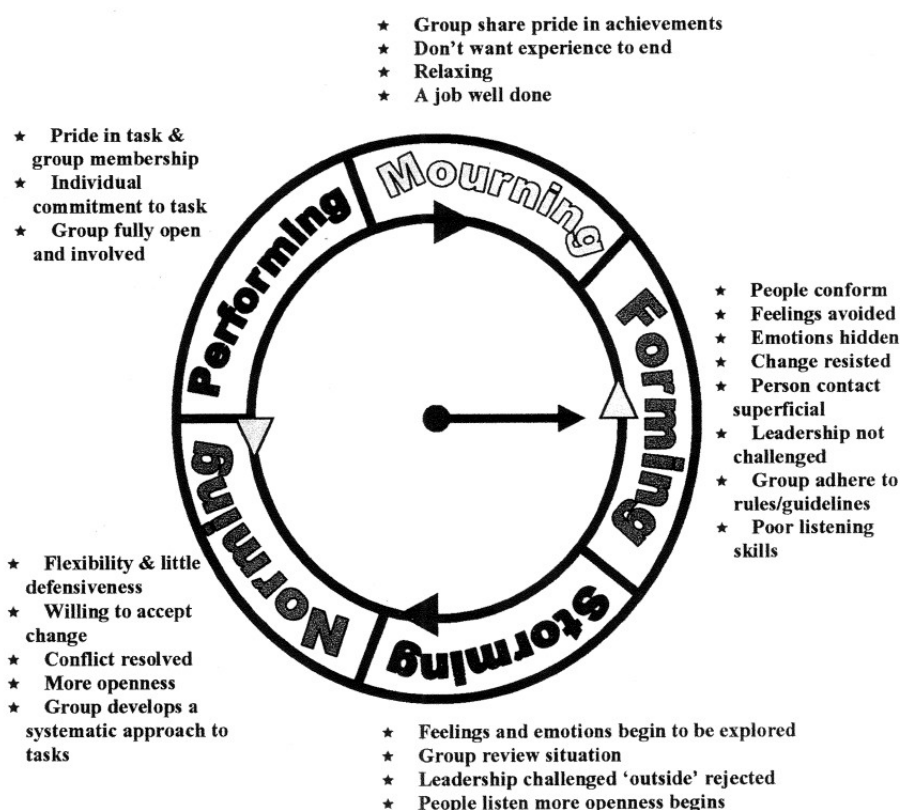


# Group Development & Group Dynamics

## Stages of Group Development

Research has shown that whenever groups get together they go through identifiable stages of development.



## What must be remembered about groups is

- To be effective groups must go through these stages.
- This cycle applies to all groups even if they meet regularly and know each other quite well.
- The groups can pass through the various stages quickly, take a long time in one stage, or just get stuck.
- Although shown in a cycle the group can swing between stages and just when you thought they had gone into 'Performing' they start 'Storming' again.
- By your actions and/or by using recognised tools and techniques you can help groups pass through the various stages and work with them to enable them to 'Perform' more often.

### The Creative Cycle

The following is a useful guide for creating the right conditions for an effective meeting or training session. Research has shown that effective groups go through this creative cycle. Being aware of it can help you facilitate better outcomes with a group. It should be used in conjunction with the 'Stages of Group Development' (overleaf) model.

<p><b>Nurturing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On arrival – allow people to 'settle in'</li> <li>● Coffee/tea and an opportunity to chat and/or have an 'icebreaker' activity ready for the group to get to know each other</li> <li>● Take time to review 'health and safety issues'. Ask about people's special needs (vision, hearing, the comfort of the room, etc)</li> <li>● Related to the above, develop a 'working agreement' (or bring suggested points) about how the group will interact and work together</li> </ul>
<p><b>Energising</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Don't put the main business first</li> <li>● Begin the session with activities/tasks that will bring the group together and help them to get a sense of accomplishment or overview of the plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Peaking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When the group is energised and focused begin the day's 'big work'</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relaxing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keep in touch with the group, don't ask them to do tasks during break time</li> <li>● Be clear about length of break time, and what you will do when you come back to session (for example, 'OK, by my watch it's 2.10, let's come back here at 2.20 and then we'll pick up with this discussion'.)</li> <li>● Give them breaks, and/or create an atmosphere where the participants feel comfortable requesting a break</li> <li>● Allow time for closing at the end of the session (remember the mourning stage of group development)</li> </ul>

Remember this is not a linear model and groups can shift between one phase to another. The best you can do as a facilitator is to keep in touch with the group and try to meet them where they are.