

UNDERSTANDING STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

If you are working with a team you need to realize that teams develop through four stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. Each of the stages has unique characteristics and must be facilitated differently.

STAGE 1: FORMING

Forming is the first stage of team development. It starts when members are first brought together to achieve a specific goal. In the forming stage members tend to be optimistic and expectations are unusually high. At the same time there's also some understandable anxiety about fitting in and being able to achieve the task. Despite their early anxieties, forming is generally a "honeymoon" for most teams.

Members of forming teams are usually shy. They hold back until they know each other better. People are guarded with their comments. No one is exactly sure how he or she fit into the new team.

This stage is also characterized by an overdependence on the leader. Members want to be given a clear mandate, structure and parameters.

Forming can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months, depending on how often the team meets and how quickly the team completes the "team formation" agenda.

Facilitating the Formation of a Team

When facilitating a new team, you need to be especially friendly, open and optimistic to help ease everyone's anxiety. Here are some things you can do:

- Make sure there's clarity about the mandate and parameters for the new team.
- Help the members to create a goal that achieves the states mandate.
- Break the ice with activities that create comfort and disclosure
- Be encouraging and empowering
- Help members develop norms or rules of conduct
- Identify tasks and specific roles and responsibilities
- Provide structure for meetings.
- Manage participation so that everyone has an equal say
- Set tone of openness and trust.
- Provide training in decision-making and effective team behaviours. (Consultation, Ruhi Book 10)

Creating Team Norms

A major difference between groups and teams is that teams have clear norms or rules set by the teams' members. These rules are used by the members to control their own and their peers' behaviours.

Developing norms is essential at the forming stage. Once they are in place, the norms are posted, referred to when behaviours become less than desirable and amended as the team matures.

Norms are always developed by the team members. It only makes sense that bringing in norms from outside and asking the members to adhere to them will be largely ineffective. Members will be more likely to follow rules that they have created together.

Norms will vary somewhat with each team, but these are some of the most common:

- We will listen to all ideas
- Everyone's opinion counts
- No interrupting while someone is talking
- Anyone can call "time out": if they feel we need a break.
- We will be open, yet honour privacy
- All team discussions will remain confidential
- We will respect differences
- We will be supportive rather than judgmental
- We will give feedback directly and openly
- All team members will offer their ideas and resources.
- Each member will take responsibility for the work of the team.
- We will respect team meeting times by starting on time, returning from other meetings promptly, avoiding unnecessary interruptions
- We will stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked.

The norms can be developed after reflecting on the Baha'i Writings related to human relations and generating and preserving unity.

STAGE 2: STORMING

Storming is a normal and expected stage of team development. In this stage, members experience a discrepancy between their initial hopes for the team and the realities of working together. Conflict arises and everyone knows that the "honeymoon" is over. Storming can take place for a variety of reasons, including:

Interpersonal conflict: People discover that they like some members, but dislike others. Cliques can form. Two people can start to clash over ideas or personal styles. Some people may not be pulling their weight. Others may talk too much or try to dominate.

Lack of Communication Skills: There may be little listening and encouragement among team members due to lack of training in interpersonal and communication skills. Members may be unfamiliar with how to manage differences of opinion, so that potential debates end in fights

Ineffective leadership: The team leader may be too controlling while three members are trying to flex their muscles. Conversely, the leader may be too laissez-faire on certain topics. Members may not like how the leader runs the meetings, or offers his or her assistance. Sometimes leaders have low personal credibility, poor interpersonal skills or are dishonest in their dealings with the team.

Problems with the task: The task may be too difficult for the team. Workloads may be unrealistic. Members often resist taking on more power and responsibility. The task itself may be unclear or the members may not have bought into the task.

Problems with organizational barriers: If the management team does not adequately support team empowerment by removing barriers, the team will become frustrated and angry with the system.

During the storming phase it is common for members to feel dissatisfied with their dependence on someone else's authority, most often the team leader's. It is not unusual for members to challenge or even reject the leader at this stage. Power struggles can also take place among members who may be competing for authority.

Because interpersonal squabbles and conflict distract the team from focusing on its main tasks, productivity usually plummets during storming. There is a feeling of ineffectiveness, and meetings where little is decided. Frustration increases. With this comes a corresponding decline in morale. People start to wonder if the team is a good idea, since so much time seems to be wasted.

If you find yourself facilitating a team that is storming, be careful not to take this personally. Check to see if this is what you are thinking:

*This is awful. Things are falling apart!
They must hate me! I hate them!
I can't trust them!
Who do they think they are?
I'll fix them!*

In order to survive storming, you need to adopt a more positive mind-set. This includes:

*Storming is OK. It's a normal stage.
They don't hate me, they are just storming.
They do not hate each other, they are just storming.
This is energy I have to channel into solutions.
We'll get through this together.*

Signs of Storming:

Use the following checklist to raise your awareness of storming. Can help you determine whether the team you are working with is in this sensitive state:

- Backbiting starts and increases.
- People talk to others outside the team about the team problems.
- People stop talking to each other.
- Forgiveness is withheld if someone apologizes.
- There is a tendency toward arguing viewpoints instead of debating ideas
- People don't listen actively or support each other's ideas
- The team is divided into factions
- Members vie for power with and against each other
- Members confront the leader in an overly emotional way
- Meetings go in circles, little is achieved
- Members talk about each other outside the meeting
- There is a tendency to complain, and "Yes, but" most ideas
- People do not like coming to the meetings. They are often late, absent or do not do their homework
- No one wants to take responsibility, follow-through is poor
- Some people start to "clam up" and no longer participate in the discussion

- ❑ Members go to each other after meetings to air their concerns about the team
- ❑ The team is not achieving its goals
- ❑ There is no attention to “process” or how the team functions
- ❑ Interpersonal aspects overshadow getting the job done
- ❑ People say the team makes them feel drained of energy
- ❑ People no longer think the team is a good idea
- ❑ People leave the team

Facilitating a Team in Storming

Storming is the most difficult stage to facilitate because feelings are running high. You need to handle the situation carefully in order to remain absolutely neutral, and not take sides in any debates. Storming also demands a high degree of assertiveness on your part. So, how do you cope?

- Expect and accept tension as normal
- Stay totally neutral and calm
- Review and discuss the Writings on such topics of love, unity, backbiting, transformation, two-fold moral purpose, consultation, etc.
- Create an environment where people can safely express feelings
- Honestly and openly admit that there’s conflict
- Help members identify issues and solve them together
- Invite input and feedback
- Make interventions to correct dysfunctional behaviours
- Train members in group skills
- Facilitate communication and help develop communication skills
- Learn together

The Significance of the Storming Stage

A team’s ability or inability to effectively address and resolve disagreement and conflict will determine whether they move into what I am calling the “good norming” or “bad norming” stage. In many ways, the storming stage tests the resolve of the team and the team leader to become a high-performance team. Teams that are able to effectively manage conflict, move through storming to good norming and eventually on to performing. Conversely, those teams that don’t effectively manage conflict, can get stuck in the bad norming stage. Team development stalls, which leads to dysfunction and decay.

What could prevent a team from moving beyond Storming

- A conflict-averse team leader
- Hot-button issues that have gone unaddressed for long periods of time
- Team members not invested in becoming a high-performance team
- Lack of open communication
- Team prefers superficial to authentic relationships
- Team lacks the ability and skill set to talk through conflict
- Team has no real incentive to resolve issues
- Team is overly dependent on the leader

The *Bad* Norming Stage

Teams that are unable to address or work through critical issues, conflict, or relationship dynamics, move into bad norming. In bad norming, interpersonal relationships become strained, dysfunctional

norms evolve, subgroups and self-protective behaviours emerge, and the team leader's ability to lead will decline. Because the team leader is primarily responsible for the team even slipping into the bad norming stage, it is not unusual to see a widening gap develop between the team leader and his/her team in this stage.

Example behaviours of a team stuck in the Bad Norming Stage

- Team members talk *about* other team members rather than *to* each other
- Team leader refuses to handle a problem within the team and tells the complaining team member to mind his/her own business
- Team is made up of two or three cliques who refuse to cooperate with each other, except on a very minimal level
- Team members are so apprehensive about bringing up issues that they'd rather avoid them or sweep them under the rug

What teams want to know in the Bad Norming Stage

- The problems within their team are either being addressed or will be addressed
- The team leader is accountable for his/her share of the situation
- The organization is aware of the problem and committed to resolving it
- The status quo is viewed as unacceptable by team members
- Team and team leader are willing to do whatever it takes to turn the situation around

When teams enter the bad norming stage, one of two things usually happen: 1) The team stays stuck in that stage and eventually has to be replaced, dissolved or in part dismantled; or 2) They fix whatever needs to be fixed by going back to storming and then hopefully on to good norming.

A team in bad norming cannot simply move to good norming without first going back through the storming stage. This means that the team needs to be prepared to address, correct, and resolve the very issues that caused them to move into bad norming in the first place. Sometimes this calls for outside intervention, and also may entail potential dismissals of team members or the team leader.

What could prevent a team from moving out of Bad Norming

- Continued fear of conflict
- Team members unwilling to go back to the storming stage to revisit unresolved issues
- Teams that have become comfortable with the dysfunction
- Distrust in the team leader's ability to lead
- Team's dysfunction has become too entrenched
- Team truly needs to have a member terminated but the organization refuses to acknowledge or act
- Team is still able to meet its productivity goals, in spite of the dysfunction
- Team leader denies any problem exists
- Organization refuses to intervene

The *Good Norming Stage*

A team can successfully storm its way to good norming by effectively addressing issues and working through conflicts. Once in good norming, the synergistic team quickly gains its balance and enters this tranquil phase as everything begins to settle into place. Team members find standard ways to do routine things, they drop the power plays and grandstanding, and everyone makes a conscious effort to work together. The newly formed norms are constructive in nature and foster teamwork and open communication.

What teams want to know in the Good Norming Stage

- Team members can build on their successes from the storming stage
- Team members can continue to raise issues and address disagreement and conflict
- The team leader’s level of trust and confidence in the team grows, giving way to a coaching and empowering leadership style
- Team members are able to take on greater roles and responsibilities within the team
- There will be a continued commitment to teambuilding, and ongoing efforts to enhance relationships
- New and exciting challenges await the team as it moves forward
- The team and team leader are committed to moving on to the performing stage

What could prevent a team from moving beyond Good Norming

- Comfort level with the present team atmosphere or unwillingness to “rock the boat” by bringing up new concerns or problems
- Team leader eases up on continuous improvement efforts
- Team members are not invested in becoming a high-performance team
- Individual efforts and accomplishments gradually become more important than the efforts and accomplishments of the team

BEST ACTIONS	WORST ACTIONS
▶ Surface all problems to get them on the table to be solved	▶ Ignore problems
▶ Create norms that make it safe to discuss problems. Encourage members to debate ideas in a non-personal way.	▶ Avoid all arguments
▶ Offer clear options and encourage members to take control.	▶ Take back control
▶ Help members identify strategies and action plans	▶ Tell people what to do
▶ Help members identify their problems and resolve them	▶ Take a punitive attitude

STAGE 3: NORMING

While norming is usually described as a team stage, it is actually a transitional step that moves a team from storming into performing. In norming, the team confronts its problems and solves them. The resolutions that everyone agrees to become the new norms for the team.

During norming, members face their issues, accept feedback and act on it. This results in improvement in the team’s performance. There are four main norming techniques you can use:

- ❑ **Survey feedback:** Hand out the appropriate survey for the problems your group is experiencing: conflict management, team effectiveness, meeting effectiveness. Feed results back to the members for their analysis. Help them identify problems and generate solutions.
- ❑ **Forcefield Analysis:** Facilitate a discussion on which members analyse what’s working on the team and what is not. Generate solutions for each item identified as not working.
- ❑ **What should we do more; what should we do less?:** Ask members to note on cards “What should we do more?” and “What should we do less? (one point per card). Collect and post cards and then facilitate a discussion to understand the points and to plan how to act on the points.

- ❑ **Personal Feedback:** Help members give each other personal feedback about what they are doing that is effective and what they could do better. Team members can share with evidence a virtue they see in each of the other team members. *For example, “I saw your thoughtfulness when you made sure everyone had a glass of water at lunch time.”*
- ❑ **Setting New Group Norms:** help members review their existing norms and make the additions needed to manage the current conflict situation

The Facilitator’s Role in Norming

If you are facilitating a group in storming, you need to instigate norming by providing methods for giving and receiving feedback. In norming it is essential that you be totally neutral and focus on managing process. Key facilitator strategies include:

- Encouraging problems identification and problem-solving
- Inviting input and feedback
- Offering training and support to team members
- Supporting members while they make improvements
- Further sharing of responsibility
- Meditating in personality clashes
- Coaching and counselling individuals
- Encouraging others to take on leadership roles

STAGE 4: PERFORMING

If norming is managed successfully, the team should enter into a period of improved performance. By this stage, conflicts have been resolved and members will be ready to focus on their work without distractions. Everyone wins here. Productivity goes up. So does moral. In high-performing teams:

- Everyone shares power by rotating leadership roles
- The official leader is treated as a valued member.
- Everyone behaves in a supportive way
- All members take turns facilitating
- The team evaluates and corrects continuously
- Members feel committed and bonded
- Decisions made are typically high-quality
- Time and resources are used efficiently
- Conflicts are seen as constructive debates, rarely getting heated or emotional

All performing teams have:

1. A clear team goal that has been created by the team and that dovetails with organizational targets.
2. Established ground rules or norms that are adjusted regularly and used to monitor and improve the team.
3. Detailed work plans that define tasks, clarify roles and responsibilities, lay out a schedule of events and specify the performance expectations of the team.
4. Clearly defined empowerment so that members know which decisions they can make.

5. Clear and open communication between members and with those outside the team.
6. Well-defined decision-making procedures that help the team know which decision-making approaches to use.
7. beneficial team behaviours that reflect good interpersonal skills and positive intent to make the team successful.
8. Balanced participation so that everyone is heard and the team's decision-making is not dominated by one or two strong personalities.
9. Awareness of group process along with regular initiatives to improve how the team functions.
10. Well-planned and executed meetings with detailed agendas.

FACILITATING A PERFORMING TEAM

You will find that the easiest group to facilitate is a high performing team whose members have learned to manage their own conflict and who have highly developed interpersonal skills. But that does not mean that our job is over yet. In these situations you need to:

- Collaborate with members on meeting designs to get their input
- Share facilitation duties
- Offer expertise to the team
- Help the team reward and celebrate success
- Offer to observe and give feedback to improve them further.

STAGE 5: TRANSITIONING

In the “transitioning” stage the project either comes to an end, or some of the team members will be moving in different directions. The project team might have existed for only a short period, or team members may have committed for a fixed duration of time.

This transitioning phase, although it lies outside of the regular team management activities, is still an important stage since it directly impacts the well-being of each team member as one or all members transition to new pursuits in their lives. During the time team members worked together they may have developed clear routines and close working relationships. They may find this stage of closure and transitioning difficult, particularly if their future looks uncertain.

In the transitioning stage, the emphasis is on wrapping up final tasks, documenting efforts and results, and reflecting and documenting the learning gained, not only by the team, but also by each individual. The team should celebrate the success of the project and capture the best practices for future use. If there were challenges in the project, it is important to reflect and capture lessons learned in these areas too to help future teams. The reflection and learning is also an important opportunity for learning for the individual team members.

If some members continue with the team, new members might also join and this new team will need to “transition”. This will mean going back to the initial forming or storming stages and a new team development process will begin. The transforming stage may also involve team members being given new roles, moving onto new tasks and objectives.

During this stage, individual team members may “transition” to a new work place or a new phase in their lives such as continuing their studies, marriage, or having children. These team members will also

want to have a meaningful closure, and have the chance to reflect on their experiences, what they have learned, how they have developed, and what lessons they will take into their future endeavours.

This final stage also provides the team with the opportunity to say good-bye to each other and wish each other well. It is likely that any group that has reached the Performing Stage 4 will keep in touch with each other. This level team may feel sadness at separating and moving on to other projects independently since they have become a very close knit group, but they can continue to reach out to each other to encourage and support as they move to the next phase in their lives.

FACILITATING THE TRANSITIONING STAGE:

- Review and celebrate team successes
- Reflect as a team on lessons learned and make suggestions for future teams
- Help individuals reflect on what they have learned personally and how this learning can be bridged to any future work.
- Provide an opportunity for people to say good-bye to each other
- If some team members will continue, acknowledge the newly composed team will be moving back into the forming stage and will be planning for how to move through the team development stages.

Challenges have been Anticipated by the Universal House of Justice:

Progress is achieved through the dialectic of crisis and victory, and setbacks are inevitable. A drop in participation, a disruption in the cycles of activity, a momentary breach in the bonds of unity—these are among the myriad challenges that may have to be met.

- 28 December 2010, Universal House of Justice,
To the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors

ความก้าวหน้าทำสำเร็จได้โดยการผ่านวิกฤติและชัยชนะที่ส่งผลต่อกันและกัน และการสะดุดกับปัญหา เป็นเรื่องที่ไม่ได้ ผู้เข้าร่วมลดจำนวนลง กิจกรรมดำเนินไปไม่ครบรอบตามวัฏจักร เกิดรอยแยกใน สายสัมพันธ์แห่งความสามัคคีชั่วคราว เหล่านี้คือส่วนหนึ่งของสิ่งท้าทายมากมายที่จะต้องรับมือ

28 ธันวาคม 2553, สภายุติธรรมแห่งสากล,
ที่ประชุมของคณะท่านที่ปรึกษาประจำทวีป

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Forming



Transition from individual
to member

- **Excitement**
- **Optimism**
- **Anticipation**
- **Anxiety**

Questions:

- Tasks? How to do it?
- Members? Do they belong?
- How do I fit in?
- Concepts, issues, barriers

Key Task:

- Establish group norms and rules

Conflict is avoided

Storming



Most difficult stage: the challenge !

- Backbiting
- Touchy
- over-enthusiastic
- concerned about success
- dissent
- competitive
- blaming
- resistant
- defensive
- complaining
- power struggle

Questions:

- Who is in charge?
- How is power shared?
- Who makes decision and how?
- How much influence do people have?
- Are all views considered?

Key Point:

- Do not take it personally

Norming



Transition Stage to Performing

- share feelings and ideas
- work out differences
- ability to achieve harmony
- constructive criticism
- sense of team cohesion

Questions:

- How will we do this?
- How can we work out our differences?
- Can we be different and still work together?
- Are we getting anywhere?

Key Task:

- Establish guidelines and rules for:
“How are we going to work together?”
- Clarify: roles, responsibilities, job descriptions



Performing

Work gets done!

- **insight into getting task done efficiently**
- **meeting deadlines**
- **harmony**

Questions:

- what more can be done?
- how can we perform better:
be more efficient and effective?

Key Task:

- Implement the plan

Transitioning

Changes!



- **celebrate successes!**
- **acknowledge & recognize the changes for the team & individuals**
- **encourage each other in their individual “next steps”**

Questions:

- what have we learned as a team?
- what advice do we have for other teams?
- what have we learned individually?

Key Task:

- Reflecting