

Session Two

Group Functioning Case Studies *Scenario B*

Some of the teenagers in the local community have decided to form a baseball team. The group members have known each other for several years, because they attend school together. They have never participated in an extracurricular activity as a group. They are very excited about the possibility of putting a team together and maybe eventually organizing a league.

Rob and Sarah are the two who proposed the idea to their friends, so they feel that they are the logical choices to be team managers. Their friend, Anthony disagrees. He feels that Jane is the logical choice for the team manager, because she has held several formal leadership positions in school clubs. Therefore, she is obviously a strong leader and would do a good job as manager.

Patricia and Diane are confused with the way the team seems to be organized. Both boys and girls were invited to join, but they feel that the group should not be co-ed. Instead, they would like to see two separate teams—one for boys, and one for girls.

Jimmy and Dana are less concerned with who the managers are and who is on the team (or teams). They would like to know who will be determining the positions that each team member plays. Is it going to be based on who volunteers? Will there be try-outs? Who makes the final decision?

Adam suggests that they seek the advice of their school's football coach. After all, he has extensive experience with organizing and coaching teams. Some of the group members like Adam's idea and others do not.

Rob and Sarah are very concerned. If they are not able to resolve the conflicts among the group members and make some decisions about how to put their idea into action, their dream will not become a reality.

- Which stage(s) of group functioning can be identified in this situation?
- What is/are the challenge(s) being faced by the group in this situation?
- Are these challenges normal parts of group functioning? Explain.
- What are some strategies the group could use to address and overcome the challenges they are facing?

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Group responses to the questions in this case study may vary. Use this opportunity to discuss the different perspectives of the situation.

Which stage(s) of group functioning can be identified in this situation?

Storming

What is/are the challenge(s) being faced by the group in this situation?

Members of the group are unsure of the best ways to organize themselves, the best people to fill certain roles, and exactly what their goals are.

Are these challenges normal parts of group functioning? Explain.

Yes. Confusion over rules, goals, and responsibilities is common in the storming stage. In fact, conflict is the heart of this stage of group development. Learning to compromise and resolve the conflict should also help to bring the group together and make it more cohesive.

What are some strategies the group could use to address and overcome the challenges they are facing?

Everyone in the group has their own thoughts, ideas, and opinions about what the group should be doing and how they should be doing it. In order to reach decisions, everyone needs to feel comfortable expressing themselves. Thoughts and opinions should be shared openly, options should be brainstormed, and the advantages and disadvantages of each option should be explored. In order for this to happen, members of the group need to make an effort to be open-minded and objective. Feedback should be offered in a constructive manner. The group should also determine how to make their decisions (majority vote, unanimous, executive decision, etc.).