# Teamwork & Soft Skills in Project Management

MDA402 Project Management

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# Lecture Overview

# Introduction

Every project consists of **team** of unique and different people. Whole team must work **together** to achieve the goal of the project.

It is expected from the **hierarchy** of every project team that project manager needs to **demonstrate** adequate set of **SOFT SKILLS** to navigate the project team on its journey.

Project is as good as its team and it's project manager's responsibility to ensure **smooth**, **effective** and **delivering TEAMWORK**.

# Group dynamics
## Overview

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### Definition 12.1

**Group dynamics** describe the **interactions**, **attitudes**, and **behaviors** between a set of people who are working together [1]

- group dynamics grow out of the way people see themselves among their peers (team members, co-workers, ...)
- differentiate:
    - **positive** $\rightarrow$ team is eager to push forward and collaboration is easy
    - **negative** $\rightarrow$ team work is stalled, progress is slow and difficult

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# Group dynamics
## Overview

**Tuckman's stages of group development:**

1. **Forming** → first getting together of the group
2. **Storming** → engagement of the first disagreement
3. **Norming** → implementation of group norms, group cohesion
4. **Performing** → the best stage of a group, performance at its highest
5. **Mourning** → sense of loss after group is dissolved [5]

# Group dynamics
## Positive

- good group dynamics enable better **collaboration** and **communication**
- the **easier** the communication is the more **effortless** collaboration is
- they also reduce **barrier** towards **successful teamwork**
- positive group dynamics can significantly improve group's **productivity** and thus achieve group **goals**

# Group dynamics

## Negative

- bad group dynamics is usually recognized by:
    - frequent **frustration**
    - confused and conflicted group members
    - exclusive friendship groups excluding specific members
- negative group dynamics can make group struggle to get things done
- sometimes it can also lead to hurt feelings and conflicts
- each source of the negative dynamics must be **identified** and handled separately

# Group dynamics
## Examples of negative dynamics

1. **Perceived social loafing**
   - discuss and clarify the workload between team members to remove the sense of "someone is not doing enough"
2. **Incompatible communication styles**
   - try to encourage by example that communication can be **assertive** without being passive or aggressive or both
3. **Too much / too little autonomy**
   - project manager needs to re-assess management approach towards the group to achieve project goals [1]

# Group dynamics
## Agile

- group dynamics can be very **crucial** in the agile teams which are usually smaller and rely on frequent and effective collaboration
- how to group dynamics can influence success of agile projects [4]:
    - improve team's ability to **adapt** to changing requirements
    - **open communication** and **shared understanding** $\rightarrow$ team is better equipped to handle uncertainty
    - **collaborative games** during Scrum meetings can improve communication, commitment and creativity
- project manager should give appropriate attention to maintain positive group dynamic and healthy environment in agile teams

# Understanding personality typology

## What is personality typology?

> **Definition 12.2**
>
> **Personality typology** is the concept of distinguishing people by their behavioral traits and viewing them as defined types

- understanding your **own** personality can help you to **access** strengths and **address** weaknesses
- crucial aspect of personality typology is that **you are not alone** → your personality is shared among **many**
- personality typology can be very beneficial among **groups of different people** → knowing how differently the personality types function lets diverse people **understand** each other better

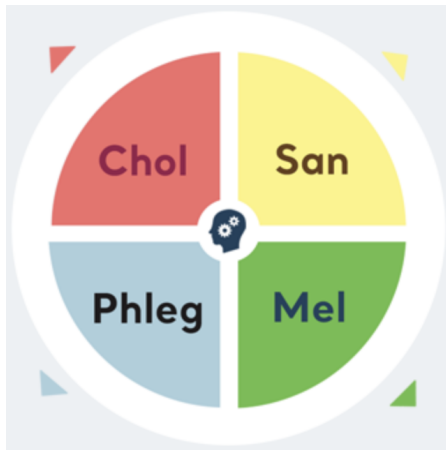# Understanding personality typology

## What is personality typology



Figure: Four temperaments personality types [2]

# Understanding personality typology
## What is personality typology



Figure: 16 personalities types [3]

# Understanding personality
## Application in PM

> Knowing how differently the personality types function lets diverse people **understand** each other better.

- this is a key point to take for project manager
- project manager should **know** his team and then choose appropriate form of management
- personality typology / types can help project manager to **understand the team**, **identify strengths** and **address weaknesses**

# Understanding personality
## Application in PM

Common negative phenomena that needs to be addressed within project team:

- **Overpowering / dominance**
- **Resistance to change**
- **Oversharing / distraction**
- **Overreaction to feedback**
- **Overemphasis on details**
- **Avoidance of collaboration**

# Patterns
## Overview

- **patterns** can be:
    - **behavioral** $\rightarrow$ based on the personality
    - **as a habit** $\rightarrow$ based on the re-occurring activity (that can be positive or negative)
- patterns could have crucial influence on **team dynamics** and **project outcomes**
- it is the role of PM within project team to:
    - **recognize** positive patterns and **enhance** them
    - **identify** negative patterns and **remove** them

# Patterns

## Positive vs. negative

**Positive patterns**

- Collaborative problem solving
- Effective communication
- Proactive conflict resolution
- Continuous improvement
- Clear role understanding

**Negative patterns**

- Procrastination
- Conflict Avoidance
- Over-reliance on "Heroes"
- Blame culture
- Unequal participation

# Manipulation

## Overview

- manipulation poses a **significant threat** to the functioning of project team
- it can be among team members, but also from manager towards team
- types of manipulation:
    - **guilt-tripping**
    - **gas-lighting**
    - **withholding critical information**
    - **passive-aggressive behavior**

# Manipulation

## Impact

- impact of manipulation can be visible in many ways, but the most visible one is **loss of trust** / **undermining of morale** within the team
- any form of manipulation creates **toxic work environment**
- manipulation can lead to **open conflict** involving multiple team members $\rightarrow$ forcing the team to spend more energy on resolving the conflict rather than delivering products
- in general effects of manipulation on the whole project can lead to:
    - poor quality of products
    - failed project goals
    - reputation damage

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[4]    Momodou B. Jallow et al. "Examining the Impact of Team Dynamics in Agile Project Management Success in Software Development: A Systematic Literature Review". In: *The 12th IEEE International Conference on Intelligent Data Acquisition and Advanced Computing Systems: Technology and Applications*. 2023.

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Thank You for Your Attention!