

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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**Group Discussion Basics**

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**An group discussion can be termed as effective if:**

- ▶ A group is able to accomplish its purpose

or

- ▶ It is able to establish a basis or a platform,
- ▶ either for ongoing discussion or for further contact and/or collaboration among its members.



## EFFECTIVE GD: GOALS

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- ▶ Decide on an action.
- ▶ Resolve a conflict.
- ▶ Solve a problem.
- ▶ Plan your work or an event.
- ▶ Provide mutual support.
- ▶ Discuss concerns/differences among individuals or groups.
- ▶ Hold public hearings on proposed laws or regulations, etc.
- ▶ ... and so on...

## POSSIBLE PURPOSE OF GD?

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Topic based	Case study based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge Based</b> – GD involves facts and figures with substantial information</li> <li>• <b>Abstract</b> – GD involves out of the box topics checking your creativity</li> <li>• <b>Controversial</b> – Tests your analytical skills as well as maturity level</li> <li>• <b>Opinion Seeking</b> – Opinion based GD checking your presentation skills and leadership qualities</li> </ul>	<p>GD involves a discussion around a situation or a scenario provided to you. You will be provided with a scenario, along with a problem which you need to resolve.</p>

## TYPES OF GD

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- ▶ GD provides a platform → voice to everyone.
- ▶ GD encourages and respects diversity of ideas.
- ▶ GD emboldens democratic values, equality, egalitarian thought process and routes
- ▶ GD leads to team building, collective sense of ownership of plan/activity/purpose/goals/conclusions/actions
- ▶ GD builds trust among team members

## WHY GD?

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- ▶ An effective GD encourages those who might normally be reluctant to speak/open up their minds.
- ▶ GDs can often open communication channels among people who might not communicate in any other way.
- ▶ In some cases, a GD is simply the obvious, or even the only, way to proceed further.
- ▶ GD brings clarity on the situation and collective ideas/viewpoints to the table

## WHY GD?



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- ▶ Discuss and/or analyze an issue.
- ▶ Create a new situation/entity/initiative/coalition
- ▶ Discuss organizational activities: sales, inventory, orders, investments
- ▶ Create a strategic plan – for an initiative, campaign, an intervention, etc.
- ▶ Discuss project progress/ Review emerging situations
- ▶ Discuss policy and policy change.
- ▶ ... and so on ...

## WHEN GD?

aggregate analysis arguments attorney based belief  
 claim co collective common consensus contain court decision  
 edit editorial facts group individual judges judgment  
 judicial knowledge law legal logic matters  
 opinion opposed particular pdf professional  
 provide public reasoning refers relevant research result sample  
 science scientific social statement states supported

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- ▶ All members of the group have a chance to speak, expressing their own ideas and feelings freely, and to pursue and finish out their thoughts.
- ▶ Participating group members can hear others' ideas, concepts, plans and feelings.
- ▶ Group members can safely and openly validate/test out ideas that are not yet mature.
- ▶ Group members can receive and respond to respectful, honest and constructive feedback.

## ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE GD

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- ▶ Group members can put forward, discuss and respect a variety of points of view.
- ▶ No one is perceived to be dominating the group.
- ▶ Arguments can be spirited, are based on the ideas/ opinions, hard facts, and are not personal.
- ▶ Even in disagreement, there's an understanding that the group is working together as a team.
- ▶ The aim is to resolve a dispute, solve a problem, create a plan, make a decision, find common grounds and/or conclusions and move forward.

## ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE GD

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### ▶ **Communication skills**

- ▶ Clarity of thought, expression and aptness of language, articulation
- ▶ Listening skills, not posing to be bombastic/loud/harsh

### ▶ **Interpersonal skills**

- ▶ Emotional maturity, Maintaining objectivity
- ▶ How you react to provocation
- ▶ Self-obsession vs broad mindedness; everyone has a point!

### ▶ **Leadership skills**

- ▶ Clarity on the topic/ goals
- ▶ Ability to lead, inspire, build a team, accommodative
- ▶ Initiative, guidance, bringing it back on track, sensitivity

## GD: BASIC SKILL SET



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► **Persuasive skills**

- Analysis, persuasion, nudge without offending
- Overtly hurting the other person to be avoided.

► **Problem solving skills**

- Creativity, out of box thinking, novelty
- High Risk High Return Solutions

► **Conceptualizing skills**

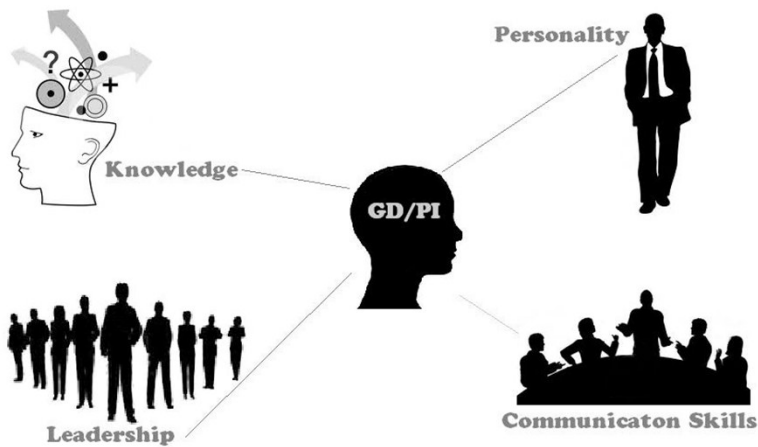
- Grasping the situation, nimbleness in responding
- Structuring, logically presenting thoughts
- Summarizing, Concluding skills

## GD: BASIC SKILL SET



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## GROUP DISCUSSION FOR PLACEMENTS

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- ▶ Develop writing skills; blogs, essays, letters
- ▶ Enhance your reading skills, news, current affairs
- ▶ Listen to TV debates, online debates
- ▶ Look for opportunities for discussion
- ▶ Learn to respect others for what they are!
- ▶ Recognize that there are multiple solution strategies
- ▶ Recognize that people think differently about issues
- ▶ Analytical and logical reasoning, thinking → practice
- ▶ Make proper arguments with substance

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR A GD

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- ▶ Basic communication skills;
- ▶ Group skills; grace; open mindedness; attitude; confidence
- ▶ Your listening skill, sensitivity to what others say;
- ▶ How you put forward your views; articulation
- ▶ Leadership; decision making skills; teamwork
- ▶ Analytical reasoning; subject knowledge; creativity
- ▶ Problem solving abilities and critical thinking skills
- ▶ Logical manner of arranging and presenting thoughts

**+ Initiator**  
**+ Supporter**  
**+ Reconciler**  
**+ Path finder**

**- Interrupter**  
**- Challenger**

## WHAT IS BEING JUDGED?

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- ▶ Keep eye contact with team members while speaking
- ▶ Good idea to initiate a GD (can become minus if topic is not clear to you)
- ▶ Allow others to speak: don't interrupt, even if you do not agree.
- ▶ Speak clearly, politely, with simple language/ pronunciations
- ▶ Make attempts to bring the discussion on track. Visualize the scenario.
- ▶ Show confident, positive, assertive attitude, without being dominant
- ▶ Speak sensibly and allow others to speak/ listen carefully
- ▶ Giving data is good; too much detailing is undesirable; Quality vs Quantity
- ▶ Avoid emotional outbursts; manage your own insecurities
- ▶ Get noticed – but for the right reasons
- ▶ Decent clothing

## DO AND DON'TS



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### **If you have the opportunity to prepare beforehand:**

- ▶ Choose the space; Provide/plan for food and drink.
- ▶ Bring materials to help the discussion along.
- ▶ Get familiar with the purpose/ content of the discussion.
- ▶ Prepare agenda notes and circulate it early.
- ▶ Make sure everyone is informed of the agenda/ information required for discussion, their roles.

## GD LEADER QUALITIES



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- ▶ Sets the topic of discussion.
- ▶ Fosters and promotes an open process/ atmosphere.
- ▶ Involves all participants.
- ▶ Asks questions or provides necessary information.
- ▶ Summarizes/concludes and/or clarifies important points.
- ▶ Wraps up the session.
- ▶ Follows-up if necessary.

## GD LEADER QUALITIES



"I'd love to add something to this discussion but I have no idea what we're talking about."

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- ▶ Acts as a role model: Practices the behavior and attitudes you want group members to employ.
- ▶ Uses encouraging body language and voice tone.
- ▶ Gives positive feedback for joining the discussion.
- ▶ Is aware of groups reactions and feelings, and tries to respond appropriately.
- ▶ Asks open-ended questions.
- ▶ Controls his/her own biases.
- ▶ Encourages disagreement in positive way, and help the group use it creatively.

## DO'S FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

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- ▶ Do not allow one or a small group of individuals dominate the GD.
- ▶ Do not let one point of view override others.
- ▶ Do not be prejudiced due to culture, background, race, personal style, etc.
- ▶ Do not claim to be 'know-all' person.
- ▶ Do not allow your own ego to overpower you.

## DON'TS FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Cinema is a threat to cultural value system</li> <li>▶ Entrepreneurs are born not made</li> <li>▶ Educated Indians lack national commitment</li> <li>▶ Technology creates income disparities</li> <li>▶ Beauty contests degrade womanhood</li> <li>▶ Is MBA necessary to succeed in business?</li> <li>▶ Joint family is a blessing in disguise</li> <li>▶ There can never be a classless society</li> <li>▶ One person can make a difference</li> <li>▶ Classless society: a pipe dream</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International embargo: the US is going too far</li> <li>• Ends justify the means</li> <li>• Marxism and its future all over the world</li> <li>• Brain drain has to be stopped</li> <li>• History repeats itself</li> <li>• How to deal with international terrorism?</li> <li>• The role of NGOs in economics and politics</li> <li>• Who is responsible for eve teasing: boys or girls</li> <li>• Arranged marriage v/s Love marriage</li> <li>• Is cloning of humans ethical?</li> <li>• Is greed an essential human quality?</li> <li>• Gambling should be legalized</li> <li>• Is God male?</li> </ul> |
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## SOME COMMON TOPICS

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- ▶ Group discussions and meetings are an integral part of your professional life.
- ▶ If done effectively, can enhance production/profits of an organization.
- ▶ Otherwise, can also be responsible for its downfall.
- ▶ Plays a vital role in human resources development and utilization.
- ▶ Brings out the inner personalities and hidden traits in a subtle way.
- ▶ Aim should be to reduce entropy and maximize desired goals, aspirations, targets, collective dreams.

## SUMMARY

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