

# *Improving Group Climate*

2020-03-23

## **Course(s) Used:**

- Team and Small Group Communication

## **Goals and Objectives:**

- Students understand the common constraints on group decision making.
- Students are able to articulate how these satisficing and group-think are influenced by these constraints.

## **Rationale:**

Students need to be able to articulate when and why groups choose sub-optimal decision-making strategies.

## *Materials Needed*

### **Materials:**

- None

### **Technology:**

- Classroom computer and projector

## *Outline of the Lesson*

1. Review of previous session's content
2. How often do we decide on "good enough" decisions? Why?
3. There are two important kinds of trust in group interactions:<sup>1</sup>
  - A. **Task trust** is the belief that each group member will do their fair share.
  - B. **Interpersonal trust** is the belief that members will act in the best interests of the group.
4. Common constraints on group decision making
  - A. **Temporal** constraints include availability and how quickly decisions must be made.
  - B. **Cognitive** constraints include competing tasks and things to focus on.
  - C. **Situational** constraints include limits imposed by the environment or decision task.

<sup>1</sup> Pearson, J. C. & Nelson, P. E. (1997). *An introduction to human communication: Understanding & sharing*. McGraw-Hill.

D. **Relational** constraints include maintaining relationships and overcoming difficult ones.

5. Potentially problematic approaches

A. **Groupthink** is prioritizing relationships and face over decision quality.<sup>2,3</sup>

B. **Satisficing** is accepting the first good-enough option rather than optimizing.<sup>4</sup>

6. Hands on group work: “Survival under time pressure”

7. Lesson closing

<sup>2</sup> Janis, I. L. (1972). *Victims of groupthink: A psychological study of foreign-policy decisions and fiascoes*. Houghton Mifflin.

<sup>3</sup> Janis, I. L. (1982). *Groupthink: Psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes*. Houghton Mifflin.

<sup>4</sup> March, J. G. & Simon, H. A. (1958). *Organizations*. Wiley.

### *Limitations*

This class requires 75 minutes when paired with the activity.

### *Variations and Accommodations*

Follow guidance from local accommodation authorities.