

# **Group Functioning & Transactional Analysis**

Three functions that influence the effectiveness and productivity of groups are

- task functions,
- maintenance functions, and
- self-interest functions

# Task Functions

- a) Initiating: by proposing tasks or goals, defining problems and suggesting procedures for a solution;
- b) Information seeking: by requesting facts, seeking relevant information, and asking for suggestions or ideas;
- c) Information giving: by offering facts, providing information, stating beliefs, and giving suggestions or ideas;
- d) Clarifying ideas: by interpreting and clarifying input, indicating alternatives and giving examples;
- e) Bringing closure: by summarizing, restating, and offering solutions;
- f) Consensus testing: by checking for agreements and sending up 'trial balloons'.

# Maintenance Function

- a) Encouraging: by showing regard for other members and providing positive response to their contributions;
- b) Improving group by expressing group feelings, sensing moods and relationships, atmosphere: and sharing feelings;
- c) Harmonizing: by reconciling differences and reducing group tension;
- d) Compromising: by admitting errors and looking for alternatives;
- e) Gate-keeping: by attempting to keep communications flowing, facilitating the participation of others, and suggesting procedures for sharing discussion;
- f) Standard setting: by reminding members of group norms, rules, and roles.

# Self-Interest Function

- a) Dominating and by displaying lack of respect for others, cutting them off, controlling: not listening, and restating other members' suggestions with a different meaning;
- b) Blocking: by stifling a line of thought, and changing the topic either away from the point of view or back to his or her own interest;
- c) Manipulating: by providing self-serving information, or a single point of view designed to achieve a decision that is consistent with their position;
- d) Belittling: through put-downs, sneering at other's point of view, or making jokes about another member's contribution;
- e) Splitting hairs: by nit-picking, searching for insignificant details that delay a solution, or undermining another person's point of view.

# Transactional Analysis

- Participation in groups is a social transaction between individuals and is called transactional analysis.
- These interactions were identified by Eric Berne as ego states.
- There are three ego states which Berne identified, they are parent, adult and child.

- 1. Parent: Individuals who operate from a parent state may display a protective, nurturing, controlling, critical, or guiding role. They may refer to policies or standards by stating “You know the rules, now follow them”.
- 2. Adult: Individuals displaying this approach will appear to be rational, calculating, factual, and unemotional. Decision-making relies on research, facts, data processing, and estimating probabilities.
- 3. Child: Individuals displaying this behaviour reflect emotions similar to those of childhood. It may be rebellious, spontaneous, dependant, or creative and is often recognized by its emotional tone. Like a child, this state looks for approval and immediate rewards.

