

In 1965 Bruce Tuckman theorised that groups go through a series of phases of life. A group progresses through the phases – but may also regress back to a previous stage e.g. when a new member arrives, if there is a new leader, if there is a major change of direction or if they are given a new task.

► Stage 1: Forming (central feeling: 'What shall we do?')

- The beginning stage when group members come together
- Important issues = 'Will I be included?' 'Where do I fit?' 'What will be expected of me?'
- People may be cautious, polite, waiting to see what happens
- Group is dependent on the perceived leader. Each testing out their own place in the group, discovering what behaviour is acceptable, how the group is going to work
- No sense of belonging – people still figuring out whether or not they want to be in or out of the group

► Stage 2: Storming (central feeling: 'We can't do it/I won't do it')

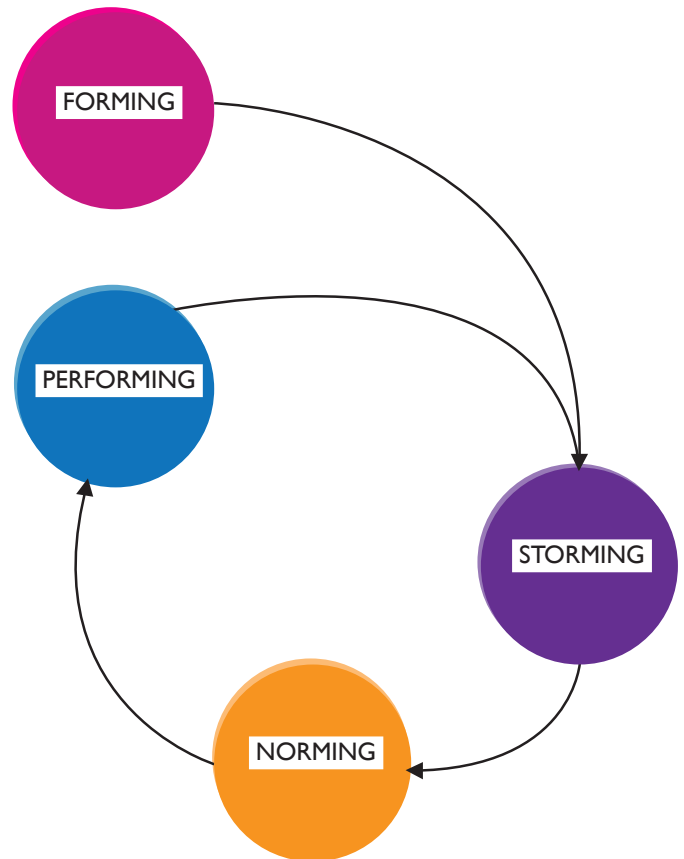
- Issues of power and control emerge
- Experience of discrepancy between hopes and reality – discover not everyone actually shares same beliefs/values/assumptions
- More openness and honesty – people expressing feelings – but sometimes just to a sub-group, not the whole group
- May be a degree of rebellion or grumbling – leader or ground rules may be challenged, material or other group members may be criticised
- Can be a sense of frustration and anger, people may even stop coming

► Stage 3: Norming (central feeling: 'We can do it')

- Group cohesion begins to develop
- Patterns of group life, how it operates become established – e.g. where people sit, who takes on a particular role, friendships develop
- Various responsibilities are agreed on – shared amongst the group
- Increasing co-operation and trust amongst group members. Sense of belonging.
- The group's culture is established – how it makes decisions, its norms, standards, expectations.

► Stage 4: Performing (central feeling: 'We are doing it')

- The group is creative, task-centred and effective – high standards, job-satisfaction
- Able to achieve agreement – clear purpose & focus
- Able to get things done – working together, drawing on each person's strengths
- Any interpersonal problems resolved; people accept and learn from mistakes
- Roles are flexible, leadership shared
- People take responsibility for self and for the life of the group (and not rely on leader)
- Harmony, trust, self-esteem, motivation and confidence are high
- Group reviews its work regularly



Adjourning and Transforming (central feeling: 'We've succeeded/It was good/We want a new challenge')

In 1977 Tuckman recognised another phase of team development during which the project is completed and the team disbanded:

- Some teams may experience a kind of "mourning" as they acknowledge the end of an era. Enlightened managers may arrange for some kind of celebratory event to mark the achievements of the team. Team members often leave successful projects with fond memories of their experience.
- Sometimes a team may move into a transforming phase in which new projects or goals are set and which may involve the team re-adjusting roles and responsibilities. The drawback is that such teams frequently do not manage to capture the same "magic" as previously. This is particularly the case when new members need to be drafted into the team because of their knowledge or expertise. Although performing teams can transform, in practice the team may revert to the forming or storming stage.