

## **Group Leadership**

The leader is responsible for seeing that the work is organized so that it will get done. The leader is also responsible for understanding and managing group interactions so that the atmosphere is positive.

-The leader must encourage everyone's contributions with an eye to accomplishing the work. To do this, the leader must observe how the group's process is working. (Is the group moving too quickly, leaving some people behind? Is it time to shift the focus to another aspect of the task?)

-The leader must encourage group interactions and maintain a positive atmosphere. To do this the leader must observe the way people are participating as well as be aware of feelings communicated non-verbally. (Are individuals' contributions listened to and appreciated by others? Are people arguing with other people, rather than disagreeing with their ideas? Are some people withdrawn or annoyed?)

-The leader must anticipate what information, materials or other resources the group needs as it works.

-The leader is responsible for beginning and ending on time. The leader must also organize practical support, such as the room, chalk, markers, food, breaks.

(Note: In addition to all this, the leader must take part in the discussion and participate otherwise as a group member. At these times, the leader must be careful to step aside from the role of leader and signal participation as an equal, not a dominant voice.)

## **Concerns of Individuals That May Affect Their Participation**

How do I fit in? Will others listen to me? Am I the only one who doesn't know everyone else? How can I work with people with such different backgrounds and experience?

Who will make the decisions? How much influence can I have?

What do I have to offer to the group? Does everyone know more than I do?  
Does anyone know anything, or will I have to do most of the work myself?

### **Characteristics of a Group That is Performing Effectively**

All members have a chance to express themselves and to influence the group's decisions. All contributions are listened to carefully, and strong points acknowledged. Everyone realizes that the job could not be done without the cooperation and contribution of everyone else.

Differences are dealt with directly with the person or people involved. The group identifies all disagreements, hears everyone's views and tries to come to an agreement that makes sense to everyone. Even when a group decision is not liked by someone, that person will follow through on it with the group.

The group encourages everyone to take responsibility, and hard work is recognized. When things are not going well, everyone makes an effort to help each other. There is a shared sense of pride and accomplishment.

Parts adapted and quoted from the following training materials:  
Heller Hunt and Cunningham. "Advanced Facilitator" Brookline, MA 1992  
J. Sketchley, A. Mejia, I. Aitken et al. Work Improvement in Health Services,  
Geneva World Health Organization, 1986

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**Derek Bok Center for  
Teaching and Learning  
Harvard University**

Science Center 318  
One Oxford Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138-2901  
Voice: (617) 495-4869 \* Fax: (617) 495-  
3739  
[http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~bok\\_cen](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~bok_cen)