ROLE WITHIN GROUP	POSITIVE ASPECT	NEGATIVE ASPECT
Self-disciplined role	Organised, hard-working, confident, trusting, tolerant	–
Energiser role	Stimulating, outgoing, dynamic	Impatient
Dreamer role	Ideas, imagination, knowledge	Impractical
Communicator role	Promotes group spirit, sociable, reduces conflict	Poor decision-maker
Innovator role	Enthusiastic, inquisitive, sets clear objectives	Loses interest after initial stage
Rationaliser role	Encourages, offers information/opinions, helpful	Moves people on too fast
Follow-through role	Conscientious, strives for perfection	Worries if things are not perfect
Facilitator/leader role	Calm, self-confident keeps group together	–
Evaluator role	Hard-headed, wise, bases on facts	Lacks motivational skills

Of the various personalities, the following are essential, the others are useful:

- Self-disciplined
- Communicator
- Innovator
- Facilitator

LEARNING STYLES

Each group member is unique, and according to their personality type, they will enjoy learning according to four main learning styles:

LEARNING STYLE	REQUIREMENT FROM GROUP	POSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVE ASPECTS
PRACTICAL LEARNER	Simple instructions, short activities.	Logical and appreciative of tasks set.	Need to be praised, not very adaptable.
INTELLECTUAL LEARNER	Learning via research, brain-storming and simulations.	Appreciate knowledge, enjoy discussing facts.	Need successful outcomes to feed self-esteem. Find decision-making hard. Often don't like groups.
CREATIVE LEARNER	One-to-one support, audio-visual enhancement & opportunities for generating own ideas.	Enjoy personal attention. Show empathy & understanding. Creative, expressive.	Need praise for their empathy.
INTUITIVE LEARNER	Problem-solving activities, analogies, use of mind maps.		Needs to be valued in the group.

GROUP SKILLS

It is for the group facilitator to be aware of the individual personalities within the group and have the necessary skills to incorporate each member's role and learning style into a successful group. The group as a whole needs three areas of group-building skills, the drawing together of which produce good group dynamics and increase the likelihood of reaching the goal set. These skills can be placed into three types – **thinking, feeling** and **action**.

Thinking skills

- The ability to be aware of yourself without dwelling on your weaknesses.
- Realising that you are responsible for your own happiness and your own goals.
- Accepting that you can make mistakes.
- Being non-judgemental of others.
- Being able to ask for help.
- Having self-motivation and being capable of empowering others.
- Being able to listen.
- Being aware of your self beliefs.

Feeling skills

- Being able to relax.
- Having empathy.
- Being able to appreciate other members.
- Able to disclose personal information.
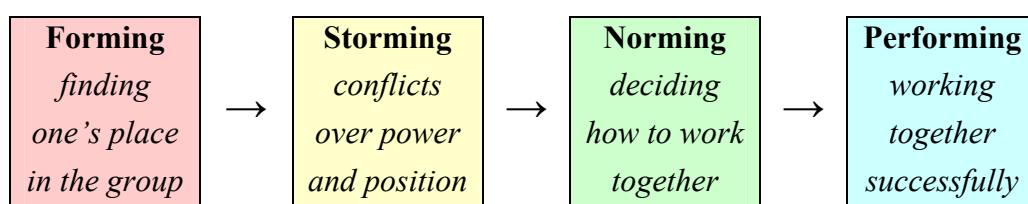
Action skills

- Being able to communicate with other members.
- Being assertive.
- Making decisions effectively.
- Sustaining positive relationships with other members.
- Completing tasks.
- Setting goals.

For a group to succeed, it must have sufficient skills to be able to:

- communicate with each other
- participate within the group
- trust one another
- disagree/agree/discuss positively
- take responsibility for individual activities/actions

The facilitator's role is to assist the forming process. This will minimise any competition and conflict between differing members. Initially, when the group first comes together, members require boundaries to be set so that they know what is expected of them and what to expect of the facilitator. It is at this point, generally during the first group meeting, where power struggles often take place and conflicts ensue. Some members will attempt to take over the group, others will try to withdraw. After this initial stage, members will begin to get to know each other, to take responsibility for themselves and their own learning, to share a developing trust and to begin to support each other.

As the group progresses yet further, each member will develop their own role within the group, developing group skills. An ideal group will travel through four stages of development:

| **Forming** *finding one's place in the group* | → | **Storming** *conflicts over power and position* | → | **Norming** *deciding how to work together* | → | **Performing** *working together successfully* |

Unfortunately, some groups get stuck within a particular stage and without efficient facilitating they may not move on towards successful dynamics.

FAILURES IN GROUP DEVELOPMENT

The obvious problem is that of certain personality types being unable to operate in a group environment. These people are individualists who may not respect or like other members. They are always right, they are not interested in what others have to say, they interrupt frequently and are generally very difficult to absorb into a group.

Another problem may be that of rivalry and, conversely, non-rivalry. One person may be set aside as a scapegoat and yet nobody wants to be labelled as different from the other members. As a result, feelings are not shared so that risks are not taken concerning acceptability.

"Being original or different is felt to be dangerous."
Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 1961

MOTIVATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Generally, a person who is entering a group environment is motivated by self-interest (what's in this for me?). If this is not tempered by a healthy empathy for other members of the group, self-interest degenerates to selfishness, with no regard for the feelings and experiences of others. A healthy empathetic awareness results in motivation becoming more altruistic—centred on the rest of the group as well as the self. The larger the group (16+) the more members will tend to protect themselves by withdrawing, both emotionally and physically.

✗	✓	✗
Egotistical, self-centred, selfish	Balanced, self-actualising	Altruistic, others-centred, selfless

PERSONAL MOTIVATION

For a person to enter a group they will have first decided that they can change. For him or her to have come to this conclusion they have made use of positive self-esteem and believe that they are capable of improving and have therefore set themselves the goal of improving. To feed their motivation and enhance their self-esteem they need encouragement and support from as many people as possible, and of course a successful group will provide this for them.

Because motivation needs constant feeding and enhancing, they need to be able to set goals in a realistic manner, subdividing the one overall goal into smaller, short-term goals so that they see progress. The group as a whole will be able to set small, realistic goals and discuss them so that each member is motivated by the others.

To find a number of like-minded members who empathise with their "failings" will be greatly valuable, both for their self-interest and their empathetic response to other members.