

MPS 28 Group skills

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CANADA

Jan., 2001; April 2002

Developing group skills starts with an awareness and application of the Seven Fundamental Rights of all persons:

R be **R**espected
I to **I**nform others about your own opinions
G to have your own personal **G**oals and needs
H to **H**ave feelings and to express them
T to have **T**rouble, make mistakes and be forgiven
S to **S**elect or choose whether you will meet another's expectations
and
not to achieve your rights by violating the rights of others

In North America, four behaviours that can destroy an effective group are:

- contempt
- criticism
- defensiveness
- withdrawal or "stonewalling"

Next, we should be aware of how to give and receive feedback. Suggestions about how to do this effectively are given in Chapter 5 from "Problem-based Learning: how to gain the most from PBL".

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Group skills: application of problem solving and interpersonal skills to efficiently and effectively complete a task & develop good morale among the group members.

Skill development:

1. Learn the characteristics of groups and how the characteristics evolve as the group matures.
2. Realize that each person has a unique contribution to the group process; that contribution should be encouraged, nurtured and used to the advantage of the group.
3. Learn how to give and receive feedback .
4. Recognize that trust is the most valued element in relationships and be able to list those behaviours that build trust and those that destroy it .
5. Acquire some skill at listening
6. Acquire some skill in assessment
7. Realize that both morale and task are important
8. Realize that groups always perform better with a chairperson
9. Accept that chairperson is not leadership. Leadership varies from person to person depending on the task.
10. Accept that if a group is faltering, process skills are needed. Gradually you will develop skill in facilitating the group process.
11. Through self awareness, begin to improve self confidence
12. Begin to develop an environment of trust where risking is OK.
13. Group skills are the first step toward developing team skills
14. Be able to identify the different elements that make up “group norms” and recognize the importance of discussing these early in the group process.

Pretest:

Group skills how aware are you of what you do in a group? Rate with an “x”

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Unaware				Aware of						Very aware
I just				Some						I can describe
do it										The details of how I do it

Skill: how skilled are you in contributing positively to the task and morale of a group? Rate with an “x”

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor		Fair		Good			Very good			Excellent

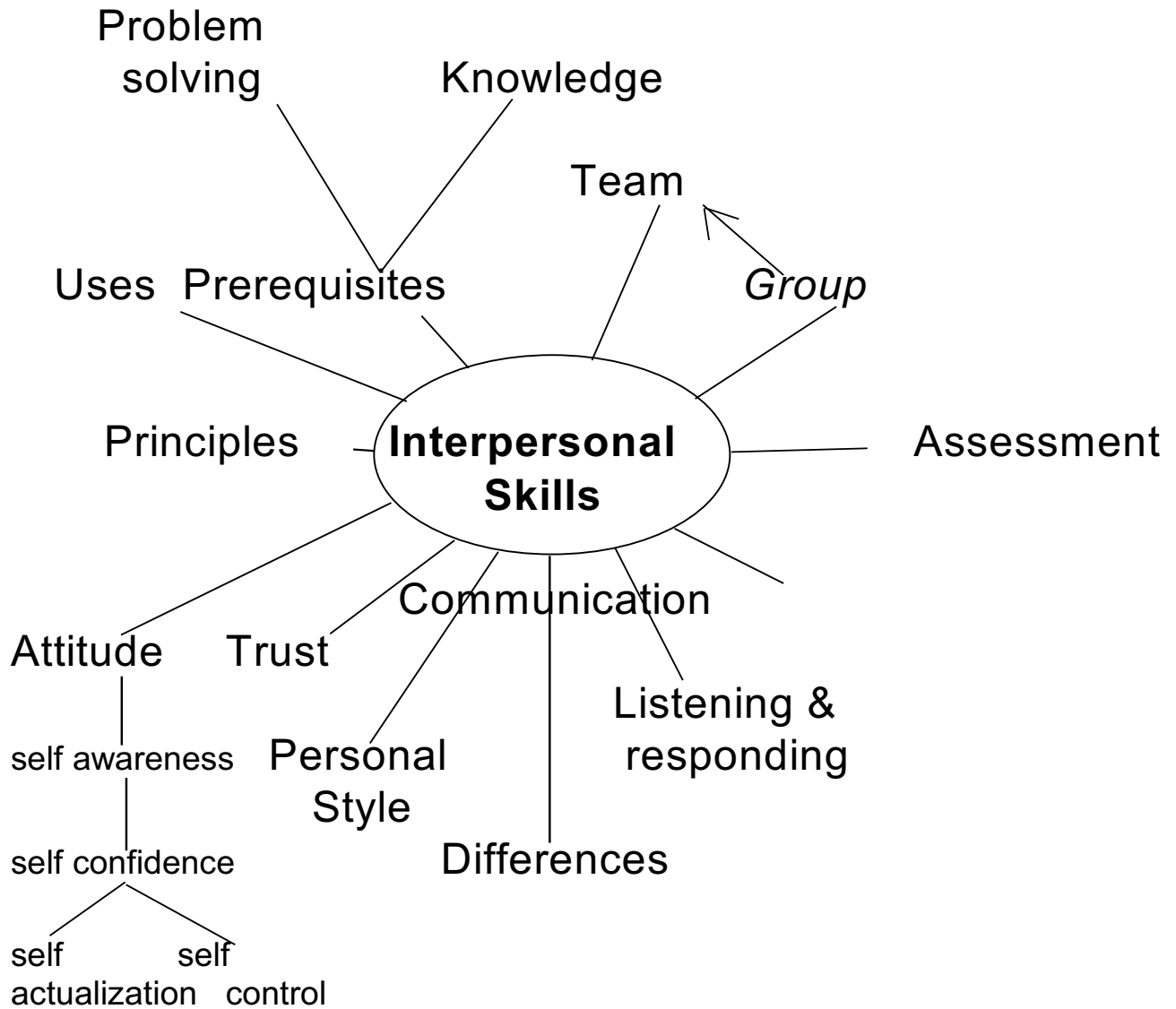
Comments:

Evidence-based targets for group skills (reprinted from references 4,17) Form **2800** .

Evidence-based targets	Progress toward internalizing these targets				
	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
● Performance improves when we have goals. ^[18]					
● Assessment must be related to the goals ^[19]					
● Both Task (getting the job done) and Morale (feeling good about the group work and about how you have interacted with the other group members) are important ^[19]					
● Any group functions better with a chairperson ^[20]					
● Chairperson and leadership are different; different people may become leaders at different times. ^[20]					
● We can list the roles needed in both Task and Morale to make an effective group. ^[19]					
● When each person has a clear idea of roles and group norms, the group functions better. ^[19]					
● When groups are functioning effectively, about 70% of the time is spent on the task; 15% on morale building activities and 15% of task process activities (how the problem solving process is going; summarizing ideas, guiding the process). ^[22]					
● The products from groups or teams is improved when members have different “styles” (in Jungian terminology some members are dominant S, and some, dominant N). The products from groups tend to be inferior when all the members “think and behave alike”. ^[23,24, 19,20]					
● The quality of decisions, product, task is improved if group members offer different perspectives, disagree and seem to introduce conflict into the process. The trick is to manage the apparent conflict well. ^[19,23,24]					
● The characteristics of “ meetings of individuals,” “effective groups” and “teams” fall on a spectrum with sufficient differences that it is useful to differentiate based on those characteristics					
● In a decision-making mode, after 20 minutes of discussion on any one topic, few new ideas are presented and repetition of previously stated ideas occurs. ^[25]					

Feedback about the group work. Form **2802**

MPS 28: Group skills *Where it fits in*



Observation Form **2801**

Observer _____ - Client _____ Case _____

Task		Group members					
Task process observer; (problem solving process)	Orients group, monitors, summarizes, seeks direction, identifies phases +						
	Ignores phases, asks whatever wants, blocks, unaware of contributions -						
Information or Opinion Giver (related to task)	Assertively gives information, makes suggestions +						
	Withholds information, silent, aggressive, passive -						
Information or opinion Seeker (related to task)	Asks questions, checks comprehension +						
	Silent, refuses to ask questions -						
Energizer Risk taker	Enthusiastic, introduces a spark, novel ideas +						
	Follower, agrees, silent unsure -						
Morale							
Observer of interpersonal process	Sensitive to interpersonal dynamics, comments on what's going on +						
	Ignores conflict, tension, hopes it'll go away -						
Giver of praise and support	Warm, responsive, gives help, rewards +						
	Put downs, aggressive, self-centered, defensive, critical, contemptuous -						
Interpersonal problem solver: Seekers solutions	Mediates, harmonizes, helps resolve conflicts +						
	Causes problems, seeks personal goals -						
Energizer tension relief	Jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction +						
	Withdraws, causes tension -						

Strengths

Areas to work on

Observation Form **2801**

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Task		Group members					
Task process observer; (problem solving process)	Orients group, monitors, summarizes, seeks direction, identifies phases +						
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Strengths

Areas to work on

Case 1: **The Fishing Trip** (from C.E. Wales)

It was the first week in August when six friends set out on an overnight fishing trip in the Gulf of Mexico. Everything went well the first day - the sea was calm, they caught fish and later camped out on a lovely little island. However, during the night a very strong wind pulled the anchor free, drove the boat ashore and the pounding waves broke the propeller. Although there are oars in the boat, the motor was useless.

A quick review of the previous day's journey showed that the group was about 80 km from the nearest inhabited land. The small deserted island they were on had a few scrub trees and bushes but no fresh water. They knew from their portable AM-FM radio that the weather would be hot and dry, with daytime temperatures expected to be over 35°C the rest of the week. They are all dressed in light clothing but each had a windbreaker for the cool evenings. They agreed that whatever happened they would stick together.

The families back on shore expected the group to return from their trip that evening and would surely report them missing when they didn't show up. However, they realized that it might take time for someone to find them because they went out further than anyone might have expected.

Items available	Rating
<i>Each person has</i>	
a. one windbreaker	
b. one poncho	
c. one sleeping bag	
d. one pair of sunglasses	
<i>The boat contains</i>	
e. a cooler with 2 bottles of pop/person plus some ice	
f. one large flashlight	
g. one first-aid kit	
h. fishing equipment	
i. matches, rope and a few tools	
j. one compass mounted on the boat	
k. two rear-view mirrors which can be removed from the boat	
l. one official navigational map of the Gulf area where you are	
m. one salt shaker (full)	
n. one bottle of liquor	

Case 2: Crash land in the Canadian subarctic

You and five other passengers are in a plane flying toward Schefferville in the subarctic when you crash-land 100 km away from Schefferville. You are on dry land yet there are at least nine water crossings on a direct line between you and Schefferville. The only means of navigation you have is a small, difficult-to-read map although you have a compass. The immediate area is covered with small evergreen trees and the terrain is hilly and rocky with moss covering the perma frost. The temperature today is 2 °C and the weather conditions are for colder air in the next week. The next airplane expected is in 3 days. There is a 800 m high hill about 2 km away, and this might put you in the line of sight with the Schefferville airport. The prevailing winds are 24 to 28 km/h. There is an abandoned mine 5 km away but off the line of sight of an airplane going to or from the airport. The plane is wrecked but before it burned up you are able to rescue the following 15 items. You all decide to stay together whatever you do. Rate the items of relative importance to you with 1 meaning the most important.

	Rating
a. 13 wood matches in a metal screw top waterproof container.	
b. a fifth of Bacardi rum (151 proof) in a glass bottle	
c. three pairs of snowshoes	
d. one sleeping bag per person (arctic type, down-filled with liner)	
e. a gallon can of maple syrup	
f. a magnetic compass	
g. a 7m x 7m piece of heavy duty canvass	
h. an operating, 4 battery flashlight	
i. safety razor kit with a mirror	
j. a hand axe	
k. a large bottler of water purification tablets	
l. 80 m of 1 cm diameter braided nylon rope, 25 kg test.	
m. a book entitled “Northern Star Navigation”	
n. a wind-up alarm clock	
o. one aircraft inner tube for a 35 cm diameter wheel; punctured.	

Case 3: NASA Problem

You are a member of a space crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties, however, your ship was forced to land at a spot 350 km from the rendezvous point. During landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged, and since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 350 km trip. Below are listed the 15 items left intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank order them in terms of their importance to your crew in allowing them to reach the rendezvous point. The most important is rated #1.

Items available	Rating
a. box of matches	
b. food concentrate	
c. 15 m of nylon rope	
d. parachute silk	
e. portable heating unit	
f. two 0.45 calibre pistols	
g. one case of dehydrated milk	
h. two 50 km tanks of oxygen	
i. stellar map of the moon's constellation	
j. life raft	
k. magnetic compass	
l. 10 L of water	
m. signal flares	
n. First aid kit containing injection needles	
o. solar powered FM receiver transmitter	

Desert Disaster

You are one of the members of geology club that is on a field trip to study unusual formations in the New Mexico desert. It is the last week of July. You have been driving over old trails, far from any road, in order to see out-of-the way formations. At about 10:30 am the specially equipped minibus in which everyone is riding overturns, rolls into a 10 m ravine and burns. The driver and the professional advisor to the club are killed. The rest of you are uninjured.

The nearest ranch is 10 km east. There is no closer habitation. When your club does not report to the motel in the evening you will probably be missed. Several persons know approximately where the club was going today.

The area around you is rugged and very dry. There are no caves. There is a shallow water hole nearby but the water is contaminated by worms, animal feces and urine and several dead mice. You heard a weather report before you left that the temperature would reach 41°C and the surface temperature would be 52°C. You are all dressed in lightweight summer clothing and you all have hats and sunglasses.

While escaping from the minibus, you as a group salvaged the following 12 items. Rank order these according to their importance for your survival with 1 being most important.

Items	Rank
a. Magnetic compass	
b. 7 m x 7m piece of heavy duty, light blue canvas	
c. Book "Plants of the Desert"	
d. Rearview mirror	
e. Large knife	
f. Flashlight (containing four batteries) in good working condition	
g. One jacket per person	
h. One transparent plastic ground cloth (2m x 1.5 m) per person	
i. 0.38 caliber loaded pistol	
j. One 4 L plastic canteen per person, full of water	
k. Accurate map of the area	
l. Large box of kitchen matches	

Form 2802

Task: Problem defined, many issues and hypotheses explored, criteria listed and the issues prioritized. Refrained from early closure. Task carried out and looked back at the result to assess it. Group agreement as to goals. Process was active with monitoring. Completed task on time. Group applied successive approximation and optimum sloppiness. Group avoided contributing excessive information.

None of these behaviours		Few of these behaviours but major omissions		Most features demonstrated		All of these behaviours
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Morale: Group relaxed; enjoyed working together. They gave emotional support to each other and were able to express disagreement or disappointment directly. Seven fundamental rights preserved. Members are enthusiastic and involved.

None of these behaviours		Few of these behaviours but major omissions		Most features demonstrated		All of these behaviours
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Individual Contribution to Task and Morale

Group Strengths

Group Areas to work on

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	
<hr/>	

Reflection:

28-14

DISCOVERY

Activity

Discovered

So what? application

MPS 28: Group skills: Example assessment tasks:

1. Watch the videotape of a group meeting and use the feedback form given in Table 1 to assess the performance of each group member and the group as a whole. Note the five strengths of the group and the two areas to work on.
2. The following are the results of FIRO-B for Andre.

4	7	4
8	3	7

- a. Assume that this is a reasonable description of Andre; how is Andre likely to behave in a group?
 - b. Based on your own FIRO-B, compare your responses with those of Andre and suggest how you and Andre might interact from at least four different points-of-view: inclusion, control, affection, expressed toward others and wanted from others.
3. You have just joined a PBL group. They have found out that you have had some training in group process. They ask you to "tell them how to improve their group skills." Summarize the key ideas about group process.
 4. You have just joined a PBL group. They have found out that you have had some training in group process. They ask you to "give us some training in group skills." Prepare a workshop. Estimate the time required, outline the activities, highlight the main points you want them to focus on.

Teacher action: Reflections about this as a learning activity to be used with your students

	already do this	would work	might work	not my style
Writing reflections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the group observation form	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessing group success form	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the learning objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the DISCOVERY form to summarize	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>