

Session Two

Group Functioning Case Studies *Scenario C*

Randy has recently begun volunteering as an advisor for a youth group at the local YMCA. He is very excited about the opportunity. The group has already met twice. They seem to be getting to know one another and forming comfortable relationships. At their next meeting, Randy would like to see them start working on some of the projects they have been discussing.

When the time comes for the meeting, Randy decides to sit back and let the group members decide what to do and when to do it. As the meeting progresses, though, Randy finds himself wondering if he should intervene. The group members are all talking at once, seem to be disagreeing about who is responsible for what, and are not really having productive discussions.

Ultimately, Randy does decide to make a few comments. He suggests that the group set some ground rules for how they would like to conduct their meetings. He also tells them that it might be a good idea to write down what they expect of one another—both in meetings and as they work together on projects.

After Randy offers these suggestions, Elizabeth raises her hand and suggests that they brainstorm a list of expectations. She also asks them to consider electing officers and making job descriptions for the officers. Bryan likes the idea of brainstorming expectations, but he is not sure about the idea of electing officers. He wants everyone in the group to feel equal to one another.

After hearing Bryan's concerns, Angela suggests that they figure out a way for all the officers to have equal standing in the group. "Maybe each project could have a chair rather than one person being in charge of everything," she says. The group proceeds to discuss how they will be organized. They need to find a compromise that makes everyone feel valued within the group. Randy keeps his fingers crossed. If this doesn't work, his first efforts as an advisor are a bust.

- Which stage(s) of group functioning can be identified in this situation?
- What is/are the challenge(s) being faced by the group in this situation?
- Are these challenges normal parts of group functioning? Explain.
- What are some strategies the group could use to address and overcome the challenges they are facing?

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Group responses to the questions in this case study may vary. Use this opportunity to discuss the different perspectives of the situation.

Which stage(s) of group functioning can be identified in this situation?

Storming and Norming

What is/are the challenge(s) being faced by the group in this situation?

The group members get along and seem excited about some of their projects, but they are not yet very organized in how the group will run or how they will approach work on their projects.

Are these challenges normal parts of group functioning? Explain.

Yes. Some conflict exists, which is indicative of storming. Mostly, there is evidence of a lack of structure. The objective for the norming stage is to determine what the rules and goals of the group will be, as well as deciding what roles and responsibilities will be assigned to each member.

What are some strategies the group could use to address and overcome the challenges they are facing?

The group should take time to explore their options and brainstorm about their goals and priorities. It may be helpful for their advisor to provide some examples of how other similar groups function. Although the youth do not necessarily have to accept an existing leadership structure, knowing what other groups do may help them to create ideas for their own group. As much as possible, the youth should be given the autonomy and responsibility for making these decisions, although advisor intervention may be necessary at certain points.