System Needs of Groups

Concepts to understand the system needs of a group

**Group**- two or more people interacting together for a purpose.

**Group Dynamics**- the interaction of group members in both measurable and observable ways and also in ways that are not so easily tested, measured or observed.

**Group composition**- makeup of the group, ages, genders, ethnicity, race, and culture?

**Groups goals**- what is the group's purpose, what is the agenda, are there any hidden agendas?

**Group leadership**- charisma, personality, and level of engagement?

**Leadership Styles**
1. **Democratic leadership**- equity
2. **Autocratic**- top down, dictated, domineering, hierarchical.
3. **Laissez fair**- hands off, apathetic

**Traits**- the trait notion suggests that leaders are born with characteristics that make them successful leaders.

**Situational Leadership**- suggests that leaders emerge out of the requirements of a particular situation.

**Positional Leadership**- suggests that leaders are created by the positions that they hold.

**Functional Leadership**- behavior that assists a group to achieve its goals.

**Resources**- groups availability of goods service and raw materials and their coincidental costs

**Roles**- Appropriate behavior formal or informal

**Values**- what the group holds in esteem

**Norms**- are the group’s common beliefs regarding appropriate behavior for members.

**Conformity**- the bringing ones behavior into alignment with a group’s expectations.

**Deviance**- violation of norms or rules of behavior.

**Idiosyncratic credit**- the potential for a member to behaviorally deviate from the group without being sanctioned

Submitted by Troy Otterson October 23, 2003
**Groupthink** - a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a group. Conformity and loss of reality can result.

**Team think** - a way of preventing a groupthink:
1. Encourage divergent views
2. Open expression of ideas and concerns
3. Awareness of limitations and threats
4. Recognition of member’s uniqueness
5. Discussion of collective doubts

**Environmental constraints or restrictions** - limitations the physical gathering place presents, environmental limits.

**Physical considerations** - time, day and location the group meets.

**Groups communication styles** - levels of passivity vs. aggression and styles of communication

**Group decision making styles** - how does the group come to consensus, post affective experience?

**Problems solving capacities of the group** - when a problem arises how does the group react or interact to solve it?

**Cooperation within the group** - how does the group interact to assist one another cooperatively?

**Conflict resolution** - does the group engage in conflict and its commorbid resolution?

**Needs of a group**

**Trust** - level of free flowing honest open communication exists, can grow with time.

**Open communication** - who talks, how often, to whom, what is the nature of their communication styles, open closed, honest, assertive.

**Healthy component parts** - the efficacy of the group can be correlated to its health of the sum of all other factors.

**Relevant expertise** - competencies in relevant areas and freedom and opportunity to share

**Support from environment** - is the group supported by the external subsystems?

**Vested interest of the group members** - to which degree do the group members feel invested, or participate in its development?

**Reason for action or a common goal or purpose** - what synergy is present purely by definition of goal.

**Agendas** - surface, hidden, achieving a balance between individual and group

*Understanding the system needs of a group “Traditional Systems Theory”*

Submitted by Troy Otterson October 23, 2003
The following should be viewed in the context of “Interrelatedness”

**Holon**- in order to understand focal system one must understand the supra systems and it’s component parts.

**Supra System** -environments, multiple can exist  
**Energy**-capacity for action  
**Synergy**-as the group interacts the energy builds  
**Entropy**- as the group interacts energy drains and reduces  
**Subsystem**- component parts  
**Organization**- level of logical user friendly understanding of system which leads to more effective utilization.  
**Focal system** - area of focal concern  
**Boundaries**- the degree to which their exists differentiation in systems of different levels.  
**Linkage**- the transfer of energy across boundaries  
**Open or closed system** -to what degree is the free flow of information present?  
**Hierarchy**- layers of power structure in which a diversity of privileges are granted  
**Specialization**- who does what? People engage in what they are most talented in.  
**Socialization**- the teaching and molding of members toward a homeostatic level of action.

Submitted by Troy Otterson October 23, 2003