

Effective Groups... The Ten Fundamentals

By Scott Thoward

Look for resources in the group. Recognise each contribution made by individuals and feedback on how it is useful to the group's aim.

Seek agreement. Consider how decisions are presented and addressed within the group. Ask, how will the group make decisions? Will the decision making process be a public record for others outside the group? If so, how will the group record the discussions and decisions?

Blend the skills, experience of the group. Have structure but do not work to a formula that smothers valuable life experiences of individuals in the group. Allow the collective experiences of the group to generate future innovation and renewal of community activities.

Provide a focus for the group. Talk through the group vision and in particular how it links to the overall vision of where the larger community group is headed.

Be fair and just in your decisions. Develop trust and lead through example. Let people know your commitment to equity and equitable practices.

Be an effective communicator. Understand and model open and effective communication. Make this a group requirement. Encourage diverse opinions. Vigorous discussion builds confidence among the group members and constantly re-news motivation for the group task.

Give group members permission to explore. Creativity and curiosity generate fresh ways of thinking about how things can be improved.

Be open about group conflict. Allow group members to air their gripes and disappointments. Let them speak for a specified time before others in the group respond. At all times the group leader should steer conversation away from potential personal attacks.

Groups need co-operative individuals. Encourage members of the group to help each other.

Offer a safe environment. Assure group members that their mistakes and successes are learning opportunities. Develop a comfortable and supportive environment where both can be examined for impact on the individual and the group.



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