know ®

EMPOWERING PARENTS TO RAISE
THEIR CHILDREN TO BE SUBSTANCE-FREE

Talk Early And Often About Alcohol, Tobacco And Other Drugs. Even When It Gets Tough

TEACHable Moments!

Know! The Stages of Group Development

The Search Institute has identified *40 Developmental Assets* for Adolescents; positive qualities that influence youth development, helping them become caring, responsible and productive adults. The more developmental assets a youth reports having, the less likely he/she is to engage in risky behaviors, like drinking, smoking and using other drugs. **Social Competencies** (meaning personal choices & interpersonal skills) is one of eight asset categories that make up the 40 Developmental Assets. Research proves that the more personal skills youth have when interacting with others and making decisions, the more likely they are to grow up healthy and drug-free.

With the start of a new school year, chances are, your middle and high school students will be assigned group projects with peers they may not know, providing them excellent opportunities to practice and enhance their social skills. Sounds like fun to some, but challenges may quickly arise when bringing together students with different academic styles and personalities.

Teachers facilitating team work and parents wanting to encourage and support their children can benefit from knowing the stages of group development. In 1965, psychologist Bruce Tuckman, created a model on group dynamics that still applies today.

Tuckman's Stages of Group Development are: Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing. It is believed that regardless of a group's members, purpose, goal, culture, location, demographics, etc., these four stages are universal.

Stage 1 - FORMING: The group first comes together; members tend to feel a bit anxious and uncertain; most everyone is polite and cautious in their behavior; focus is usually on members getting to know each other and discussing the group's purpose.

> **Here's how teachers and other group leaders can help:** Provide clear expectations for the group members, establish ground rules for differing opinions; take time in this stage to allow for team building and bonding; guide the group in establishing team roles. Taking these basic steps in the beginning will set students up for better success throughout the rest of the process.

Talking regularly with kids about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using.

Know! urges you to encourage other parents to join Know!.

Click here for the Know! Parent Tip Sign-Up Page.

Know! is a program of:

DFAA
Drug Free Action Alliance

Lifetime Prevention Lifetime Wellness

Drug Free Action Alliance 6155 Huntley Rd. Suite H Columbus, Ohio 43229

Stage 2 – STORMING: This second stage is when conflict and competition are most likely to arise; the members become more comfortable with one another; the more dominant personalities begin taking charge while less confrontational individuals may remain quiet (even though issues may be developing); opinions become divided and multiple 'leaders' may vie for control; arguing may become the primary form of communication. In this stage focus tends to be around leadership, authority, rules, responsibilities and structure. Some groups have a hard time moving beyond this stage.

> **Here's how teachers and other group leaders can help:** Assist the group in identifying strengths among members; it is best to make choosing a leader a group-wide decision, but in some cases, assigned roles may be necessary; encourage students to explore differing opinions within the group; if communication turns to arguing, step in to ease the tension and bring them back to the task at hand; allow students some time and space apart if needed.

Stage 3 – NORMING: The group begins working out their differences and comes together as a cohesive unit, acknowledging the talents and skills each member brings to the table; members openly exchange ideas; morale increases and a sense of community develops; members are more flexible and trusting of each other. The members focus is on the group's purpose and goal.

> **Here's how teachers and other group leaders can help:** While the norming stage is a good place to be, students can become complacent, thinking they can get by with just 'good enough'; provide a measurable opportunity for productivity and success and encourage them to give 100% to achieve it; praise them for their positive communication and hard work.

Stage 4 – PERFORMING: At the fourth stage, the group is at its peak in productivity; students have clearly defined roles and are able to work effectively as a group; they are unified, loyal and supportive of each other; the group members take pride in their work and are focused on the end goal.

> **Here's how teachers and other group leaders can help:** This stage requires less adult supervision and hand-holding and more student interdependence on their group members; at this point a teacher or other group leader's biggest job is to remain available for questions and suggestions, while continuing to offer praise.

While group interaction can be challenging, it is a great tool in improving students' social skills, especially in a world where too many faces (young and old) are constantly buried in their handheld communication devices. Teaching and improving interpersonal skills now will increase your child's chances for healthy, thoughtful decision-making throughout life.

To learn more about The 40 Developmental Assets, visit: **search-institute.org**.

To learn more about Tuckman's Stages of Group Development, visit: **education-portal.com**.

SOURCES: Educational Portal: Stages of Group Development: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing & Adjourning. **Search Institute: The 40 Developmental Assets.** Youth Working It: Working with Youth – Group Development.

Please note: You are encouraged to share the stages of group development with your students as well, so that they too may be more self-aware throughout the process.

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