

Task-Process-Relationship

- guide -

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How Can This Help Us?

Working in groups can sometimes feel challenging, frustrating, or bothersome. There may be times that some members think the group is overfocusing on something 'unpleasant,' 'unnecessary,' or 'inappropriate.' Different people will view those differently. It can be challenging to find a good balance of three equally important – and very different – aspects of group well-being:

- Accomplishing **tasks**
- Effective **processes**
- Supportive **relationships**

Many groups focus primarily on accomplishing tasks, and could spend more time on processes and relationships. Processes include group functions like: decision-making, areas of responsibility, task assignment, use of resources, members joining or leaving. Relationships include cultivating compassion, building a sense of team or community, conflict resolution, and enjoying (or at least tolerating) each other's company.

Guide

How things get done is as important as what things get done.

An Inner Transition toward more collaborative ways of relating, organising, and sharing power may involve groups recalibrating to spend more time on processes and relationships, while continuing to accomplish tasks.

Many groups have considerations like:

- limited resources and capacity
- being mostly volunteers
- limited time; sense of urgency; experiencing time as linear instead of cyclical
- a culture of avoiding rest, reflection, or uncomfortable emotions

Many groups may have limited experience with:

- communicating in ways that support group collaboration
- self-awareness of behaviours (e.g. relationship with power) and how this impacts others
- processes that support group collaboration rather than hierarchy
- non-hierarchical, collaborative, or agile decision-making
- replacing excessive 'busy-ness' (overfocus on tasks) with a more balanced approach.

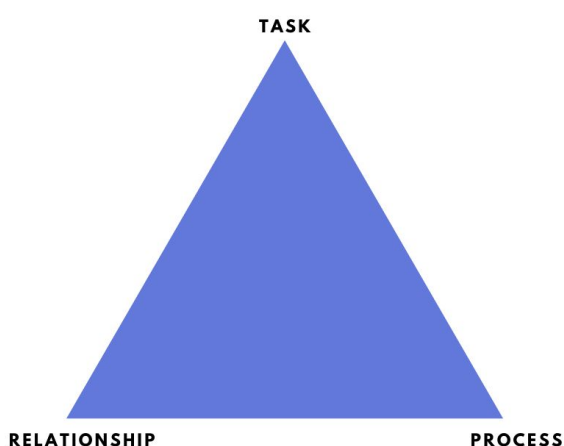
These factors can mean it is challenging for a group to change how they do things, not because they don't want to but because they feel they lack the time and knowledge.

Group Culture

These aspects of a group's culture are part of an Inner Transition toward collaboration. Ideally groups can avoid getting stuck in ineffective processes and relationship conflicts that can lead to burnout. Prioritising time for processes and relationships can help a group Transition toward a nourishing group culture which supports our tasks and outcomes (our aims and purpose in the world).

Transforming group culture is an important part of an Inner Transition. This can involve being willing to engage courageously in conversations or conflicts. As with any Inner Transition, this can feel uncomfortable or scary, may involve facing uncertainty, and may take some time. Try to have compassion for anyone who may be struggling (including yourself), rather than criticising or being impatient. Ideally, Transitioners can learn to turn towards discomfort with compassion, curiosity, and courage, and begin to embody more collaborative ways of working together.

The Task-Process-Relationship model



A group's long-term well-being and success depends on spending time on **processes** and **relationships** as well as on accomplishing **tasks**. Time for processes and relationships can either be scheduled separately, or integrated into existing meetings, agendas, yearly work plans, strategy sessions, personal work plans, or away days.

Group contexts and cultures vary, so times need not be exactly equal. One group may spend most of its time accomplishing tasks, while ensuring that some good time is scheduled for processes and relationships. Another group may spend more time on processes and relationships, and only accomplish a few tasks in a way everyone feels good about.

Time for processes may include:

- new members joining once a month
- reviewing task assignments every 3 months
- reviewing resource allocation every 6 months
- reviewing areas of responsibility every 12 months

Time for relationships may include:

- daily: sharing gratitude at team meetings
- weekly: brief personal check-ins at business meetings
- monthly: dedicated meetings for personal check-ins or heart-sharing
- yearly: team-building retreats
- as needed: conflict resolution sessions

For instance, the team at Transition Network has tried:

- Alternating each month between a task-focused 'Doing' team meeting, and a 'Being' team meeting for relationships and processes.
- Empowering a 'Keeper of the Heart' at meetings to call attention to emotions, relationships, communication and celebration.
- Using sociocracy for consent-based decision making, which aims to include all group members' perspectives, while encouraging flow and experimentation with decisions that are 'good enough for now and safe enough to try.'
- Bi-annual in person team gatherings
- Celebrating accomplishments done in a good way; acknowledging ongoing relationship frustrations or conflicts; and adjusting processes to be more supportive.



Related Transition resources

[Healthy Groups](#)

[Decision Making](#)

[Offering and Receiving Feedback](#)

[Inner Transition Activities for Meetings](#)

[Action Reflection Cycle](#)

More support

[7 essential ingredients and delivering practical projects](#)

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