3.5 Team development and Communication
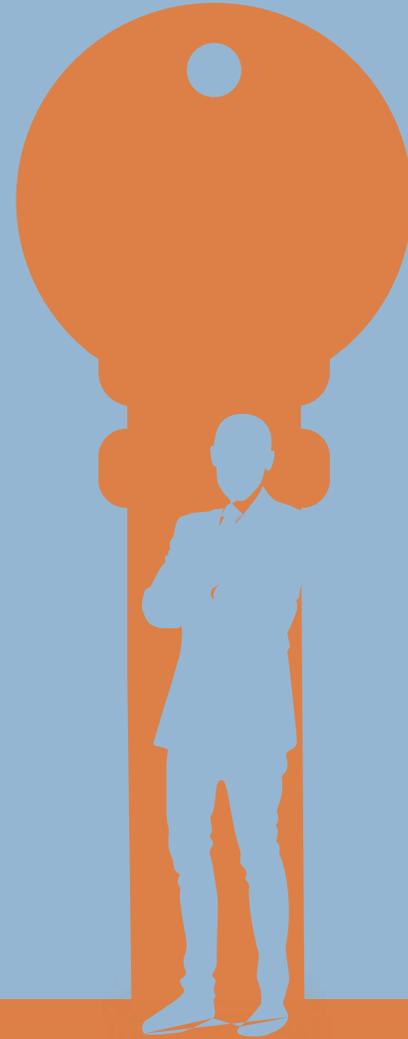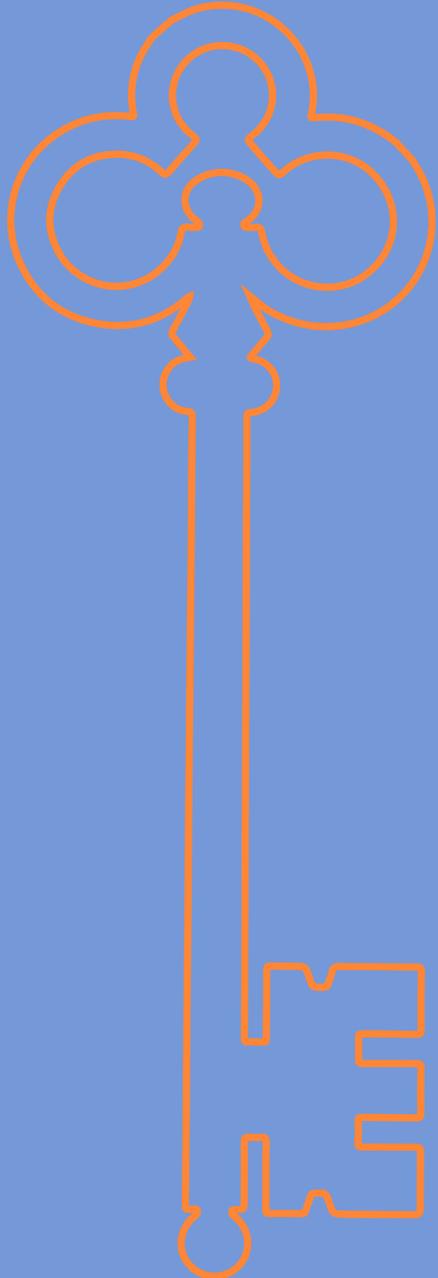
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Definition of team

> "two or more interacting and interdependent individuals who have joined together to achieve specific goals"
>
> (Robbins & Judge, 2011).

➢ The main characteristics which define a team are as follows:

1. **Determined relations between group members**
2. **Team consciousness**
3. **A sense of common purpose**
4. **Interdependence**
5. **Capability of operating like a single body**

➢ Teams may be **formal** or **informal**.

Formal teams

➢ They are **typically structured** and **organizationally defined** groups.

➢ They can take the following forms:

Vertical group

Committee

Group of specific projects

Horizontal group

Group for specific categories

Informal teams

❖ They meet the **need for social contact**, i.e. a "social" group that is created by the need of people to meet social needs within the organization, such as:

- a group of friends
- a group of common interests
- a group of specific-personal interests

Reasons for creating informal teams

▶ Security: reducing loneliness and strengthening personal power

▶ Prestige: participation into a team usually offers recognition and prestige to members

▶ Self-esteem: the value that the individual has for himself is strengthened

▶ Creating social bonds: meeting the social needs of the individual

▶ Power: "there is no strength without unity"

▶ Goal achievement: what many persons can achieve, can not be achieved by an individual.

Team building

The teams' effectiveness depends on a number of factors:

Team composition
refers to:
- its size,
- capabilities (e.g. problem-solving techniques, interpersonal relations, - *nature of the project and leadership which affect the capacity ratio*-),
- the members personalities
- the role definition.
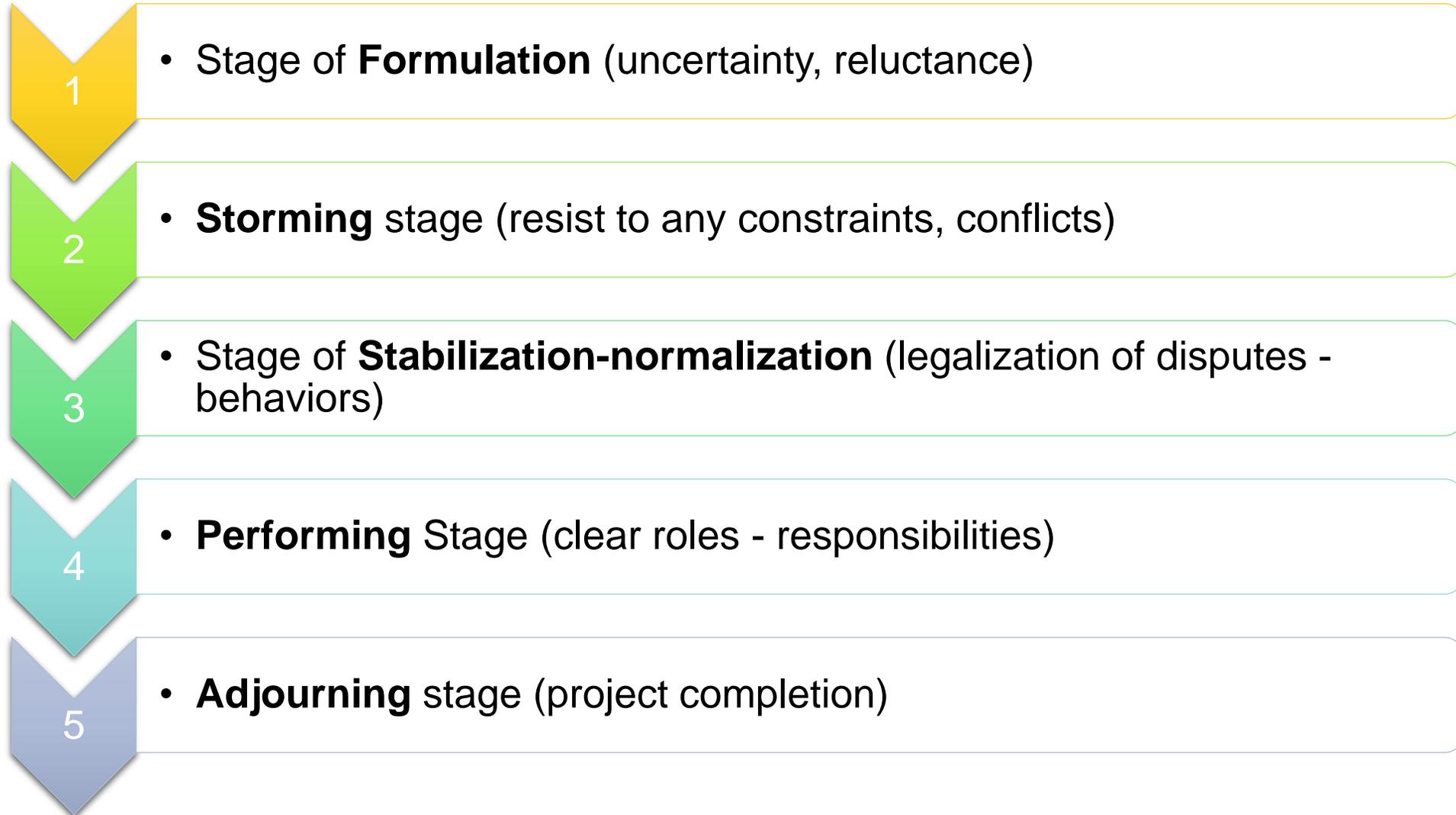
Operating framework
refers to:
- the adequacy of resources,
- the type of leadership and structure,
- the degree of trust among members,
- the existence of performance evaluation systems and remuneration systems.

Procedures followed

refer to:
- acceptable attitudes,
- common goals,
- conflict management,
- group competence.

Basic stages of team creation and development

1
- Stage of **Formulation** (uncertainty, reluctance)

2
- **Storming** stage (resist to any constraints, conflicts)

3
- Stage of **Stabilization-normalization** (legalization of disputes - behaviors)

4
- **Performing** Stage (clear roles - responsibilities)

5
- **Adjourning** stage (project completion)

Prerequisites of group development

- ❑ Shared belief in "WE" and not in "I"

- ❑ Mutual trust, support and respect

- ❑ Open, honest communication

- ❑ Coordination, methodology, leadership

- ❑ Common objectives and vision

Malfunctions faced by teams

⊗ Lack of mutual trust.

⊗ Lack of open communication, prevention of conflicts.

⊗ Lack of responsibility towards the team.

⊗ Lack of commitment to team's objectives and priority to individual goals.

⊗ Lack of commitment to decisions. Existence of compromise and compliance but not of consensus.

Management of conflicts in teams

❑ People and teams with different values, experiences, perceptions, abilities, duties, needs and goals are required to coexist and collaborate, in a complex environment characterized by uncertainty and continuous changes.

❑ Modern management theories state that conflicts are unavoidable.

❑ They are due to the complexity of the structures, procedures, rules, techniques and systems of the working environment.

❑ They can have **negative** and **positive consequences as well.**

**1) Cognitive Conflict, Task-focused Conflict ή Task Conflict**

- It refers to member conflicts that focus on common goals.

- This type should be treated with discussion and further analysis rather than being avoided or ignored, because it can be very **constructive** and help increase:
  - ✓ effectiveness
  - ✓ quality of decision making
  - ✓ creativity
  - ✓ compassion
  - ✓ team performance

2) Affect Conflict, Relationship Conflict ή Interpersonal Conflict

- It refers to disagreements arising from personality conflicts or emotional interactions among members, often perceived as personal attacks.

- Unlike the first type, this is considered to be **detrimental** because it can lead to increased mistrust, hostility, cynicism and apathy of members, while reducing team consistency and the possibility of unanimity .

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT
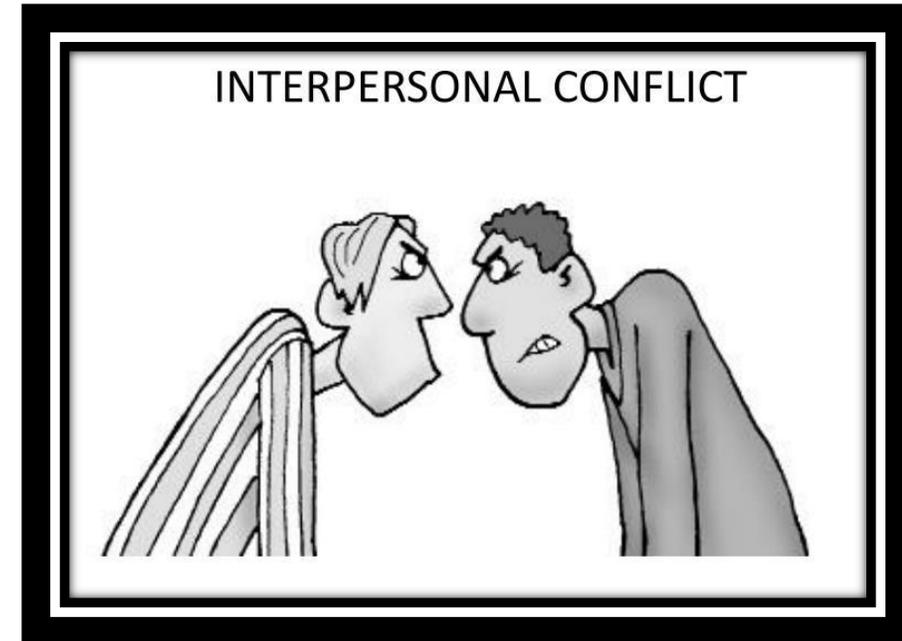
Addressing internal conflicts

Stage 1 Cooperation

- Efforts should be made, in order to be informally resolved with open, sincere discussion and avoiding of excessive reactions.

Stage 2 Intermediaries

- A third person with experience and ability to handle tensions, such as an employee motivator, is called as an intermediary to reach agreement between the conflicting sides. The effectiveness of mediation depends on the intermediary's neutrality and the trust that the two sides have to him/her.

Stage 3 Team meeting

- The whole team shall help to address the problem. There should be a meeting where all members are present and an analysis of the situation and arguments on both sides is carried out, while also attempts to link the problem to the requirements of the enterprise or customers, are made.

Communication

Basic communication characteristics

1. **Ability to see things** not only from his own point of view, but also **from his/her interlocutor point of view**, i.e. to have **empathy**.
Empathy: a basic ability for effective interpersonal communication, as the employee is being able to understand exactly what the other person wants to say, without decoding and interpreting the message as he/she wants.

2. Ability to accept what his/her interlocutor says, keeping his/her critical perspective on the message content until the interlocutor come to an end.

3. Responsibility to take the "overall image" of his/her interlocutor, which means that he/she should emphasize on both the verbal and non-verbal behavior of the other.

4 key elements in the communication process

🔑 **The Receiver** (who decodes and interprets the message, and requires the ability to listen)

🔑 **The Channel** (the path that follows the message - up, down, horizontal, typical, friendly, spoken, or written)

🔑 **Feedback**

🔑 **The Perception** (the meaning given in the message both by the sender & by the Receiver).

■ So there is the **sending**, **receiving**, **encoding** and **decoding** of information.

■ Significant the ability of both "**listening**" and "**speaking**", which create conditions of **active participation** and **interaction**.