
Problem Solving in Groups

Chapter Ten

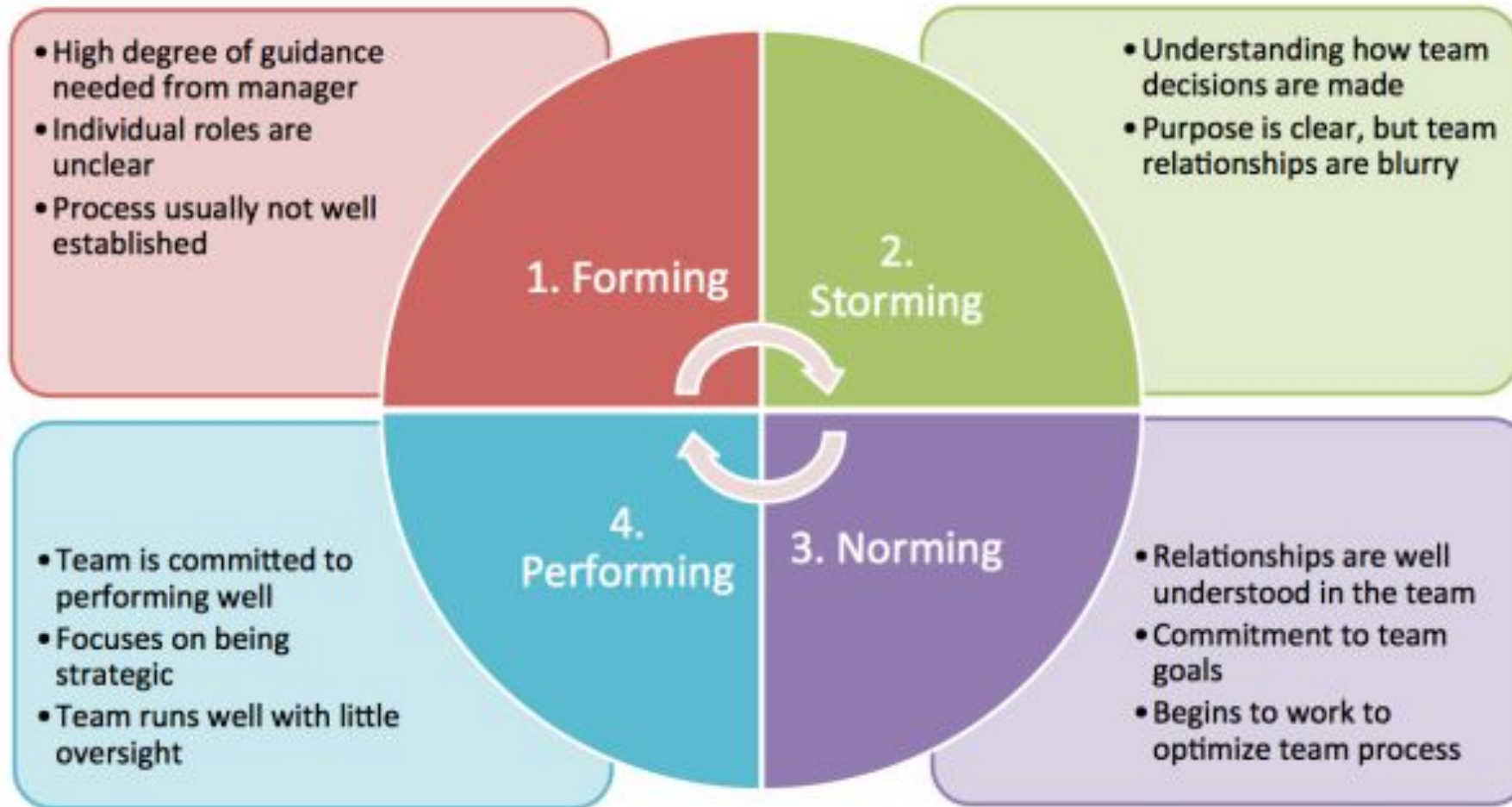
Advantages of Problem Solving

Advantages of Group Problem Solving

- Research indicates that working in groups produces more solutions than working alone
- Access to more resources
- Accuracy: able to catch errors
- Commitment: people prefer solutions they have worked for
- Diversity: groups allow us to learn about ideas we would not have thought of alone

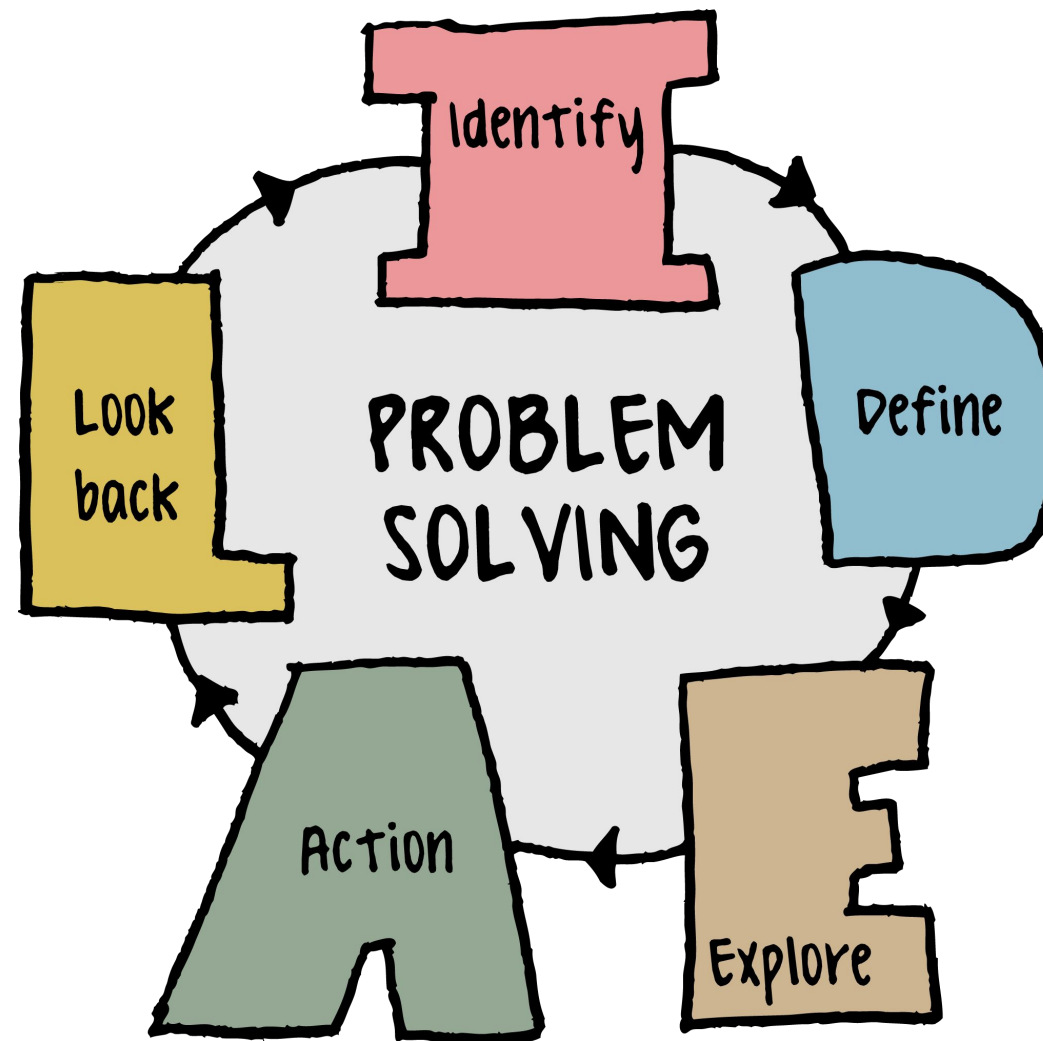
Stages of Group Development

The Stages of Team Development



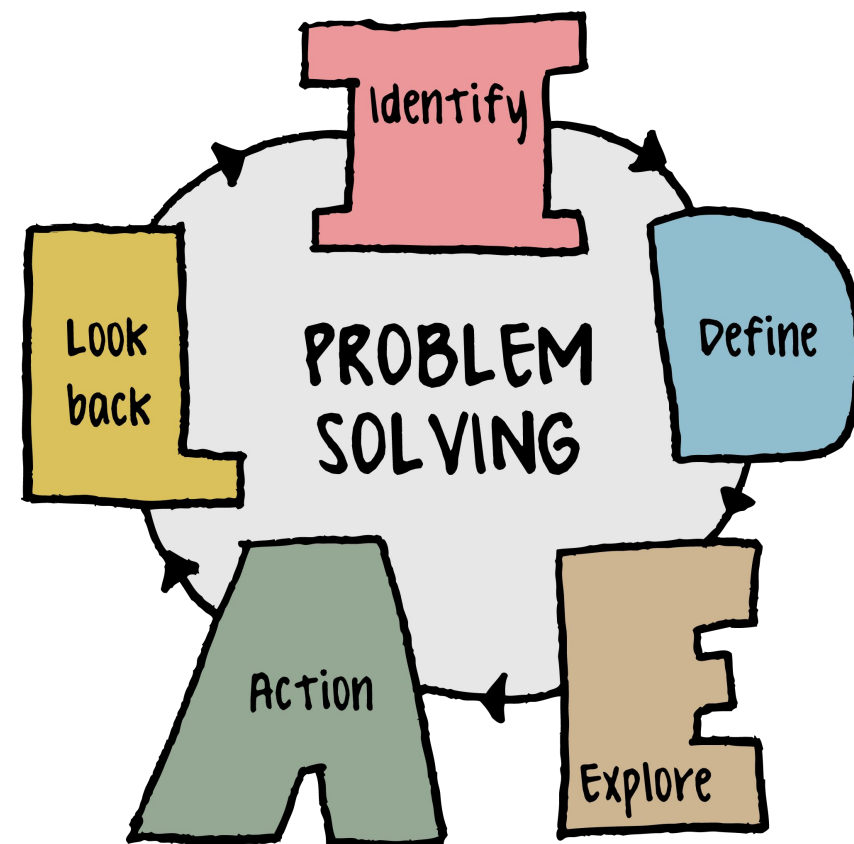
Approach to Problem Solving

- Identify the problem
 - Determine the group's goals
 - Determine individual goals
- Analyze the problem
 - Word it as a question
 - Identify criteria for success
 - Gather relevant information
 - Identify resources and obstacles



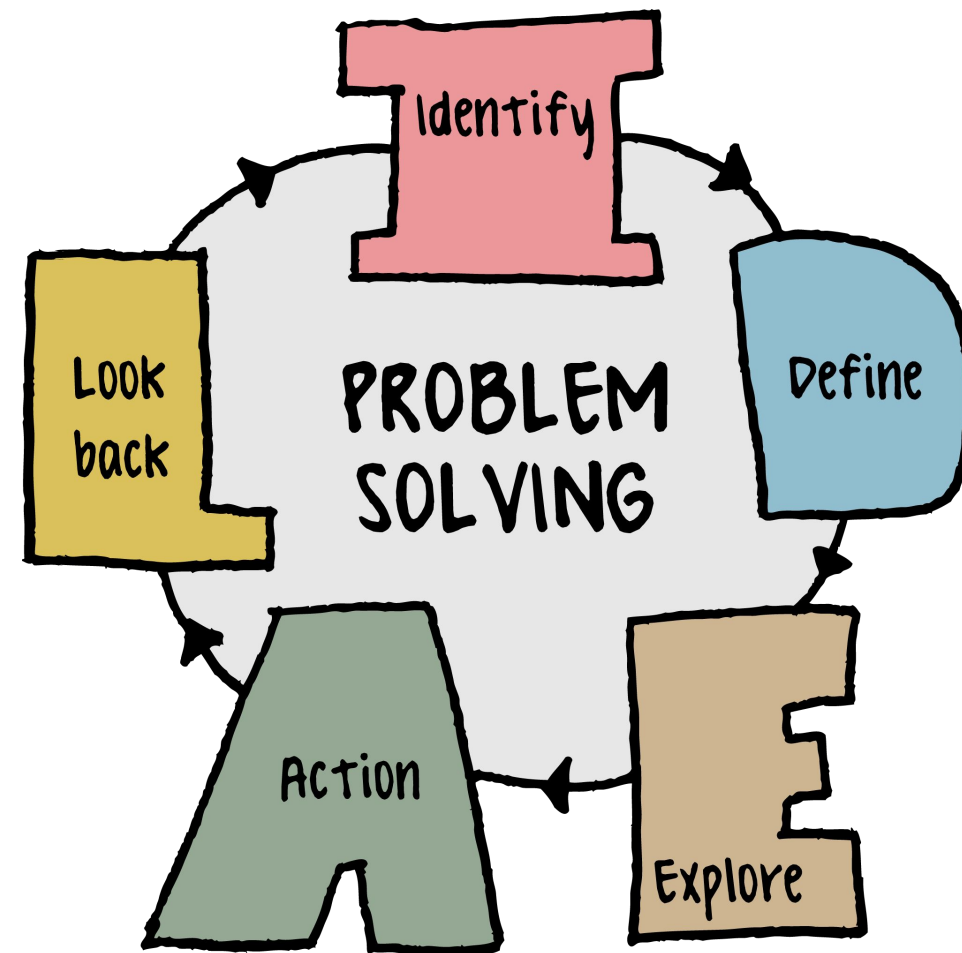
Approach to Problem Solving

- Develop creative solutions through brainstorming
 - Avoid criticism
 - Encourage idea exchange
 - List a large number of ideas
 - Combine ideas
- Evaluate the solutions
 - Which solutions provide the desired change?
 - Are most achievable?
 - Contains the fewest disadvantages?



Approach to Problem Solving

- Implement the plan
 - Identify the tasks
 - Determine the resources
 - Define responsibilities
 - Provide for emergencies
- Follow up on the solution
 - Meet to evaluate progress
 - Revise the approach as needed



Decision-Making Methods

Decision-Making Methods

- Consensus
 - all members support a decision they have made as a group
- Expert opinion
 - a group member is deemed the expert and makes the decisions
- Minority control
 - a few members make decisions
- Authority rule
 - quick method when one member makes decisions

Dangers In Group Discussion

Overcoming Dangers in Group Discussion

- Information underload
 - a group lacks information necessary to operate effectively
- Information overload
 - the rate of complexity is too great to manage
- Unequal participation
 - not all group members participate equally

Another Danger of Groups

- Pressure to conform
- Groupthink
 - a group's collective striving that discourages realistic appraisals of alternatives

WHEN ALL **THINK** ALIKE,
THEN NO ONE IS THINKING

-WALTER LIPPMAN-



Solutions for Group Conflict

- Keep the group small
- Reinforce contributions
- Assign tasks
- Use group techniques
- Use effective gathering areas to illicit participation



5:1 Ratio

(n) 1. For every negative interaction during conflict, a stable and happy relationship has five (or more) positive interactions.

The Gottman Institute