

The Five Stages of Team Development

You're a team, so it pays to have an awareness of team dynamics, right? That way, when your team goes through a bit of dysfunction, you know it's just part of the natural order of things.

These are the five stages of team development.

1. Forming

In the 'Forming' stage, there is often a lot of excitement and a little bit of anxiousness. Everything's a bit new and everyone's on their best behaviour. Because we're all figuring each other out, people might also hold back a bit and are often unsure of what their roles are. There may be a lot of questions and there's often a healthy amount of awkwardness. But as connections are made and friendships formed that all starts to change and the team starts to find its groove.

2. Storming

If you look at team development like a lifecycle, then 'Storming' is definitely the puberty stage. It's all a bit turbulent, happens to everyone, is essential for the team to mature and, in the big picture, doesn't actually last that long. In this stage, personalities may start to clash, ideas may be challenged and boundaries may be pushed. The team has been together long enough to be comfortable in raising issues, but not long enough to know how to do so in the best way. 'Storming' is normal. It's sometimes hard, but it's always necessary. It helps us find where we stand and how we work. Ultimately, your group will move forward when it can recognise conflict and resolve it.

3. Norming

Once we've popped out the other end of the 'Storming' stage we have our norms. Now that team members know one another better, they are able to ask one another for help and provide constructive feedback. Yay! We've found our best way to work together. We know how we get on with each other. We know how we raise and resolve issues. We know how we plan and make decisions. We have found ourselves a new "normal" and we get on with it!

4. Performing

'Performing' is the stage that every team wants to move towards. In this stage the team is confident in what it is doing and why it is doing it. Having created a way of working together, the team now takes opportunities to innovate and be creative. There is a higher level of independence and the team takes initiative. Disagreements still happen, but the team addresses these in a positive and constructive way.

5. Mourning

At some point the team will say goodbye to each other. There may be sadness about letting go of the team, or there may be anxiousness about what happens next. The team may lose focus of tasks in the lead up to the break up. This is a good time to thank departing members for their contribution and to celebrate the successes of the team. We recommend pizza.