



UNIT III: Group/ Organizational Leadership Skills

Module 1: Productive Groups

Many different types of groups are involved with community activities. Some are loose and unstructured; others are formal organizations or associations. Some are temporary committees or task forces; others are ongoing parts of a structured organization or coalition. A productive group accepts and supports differences, communicates openly with respect, and works together for mutual goals. A newly formed group does not have clear rules on what is appropriate behavior. Fear of not being accepted or respected can create problems. It is important that all group members get to know one another and feel comfortable with one another. A variety of activities and approaches can help meet the needs of group members and encourage effective decision making and action.

When a new group is being formed, or when an individual joins an existing group for the first time, similar problems are encountered by most people. The usual way of interacting with others does not work because the situation is not familiar. Often people hold back, waiting to see what others are going to do. Not only is the situation strange, but it is unclear what others think is proper behavior. In a sense, group members have an identity problem. They know who they are as individuals, but not who they are in relation to others in the group.

What is a Group?

A group is a collection of individuals where:

- Interaction among members occurs. Members work together and relate to each other in an interdependent manner.
- Individuals see themselves and one other as members of the group and find their membership rewarding. Greater benefits are provided to a group than to separate individuals.
- Members share a common purpose or goal that they understand and accept.
- Members have an established, mutually acceptable structure for accomplishing tasks and interacting with each other.
- Members successfully complete different tasks in order to accomplish a shared purpose.

A collection of individuals is not a “group” at its first organizational meeting. The cohesiveness and team spirit that characterize a group come with time, while people gather to share ideas and skills to achieve a common goal.^{1,2}

Types of Groups

Groups may be very loosely structured or be formal organizations with by-laws and specific operational procedures. Committees, task forces, teams, clubs, and other organizations are examples of groups with various structures:

1. Collections of individuals with loose ties.

Example: An informal network of persons who know one another and who exchange ideas and sources of information.