



MASTER GUIDE PROGRAM



Group Skills

New Skills Development



January 2009



MASTER GUIDE

Teaching Resource for the Master Guide Course.

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CHAPTER 1: Establishing a Group

This presentation is about group skills and explains how to create and maintain effective groups in a club setting and in any given activity. It deals with what happens in a group and the special role the leader has in maintaining the success of the group.

The bible Contains stories about different groups of people having to deal with specific needs. Such groups include Joseph's brothers, Daniel and his three friends, David and his band of brothers, the Disciples and the early church. All of the principles of group skills are found in these stories.

A group is a collection of individuals who are prepared to function together to achieve a specific goal or purpose. They are prepared to adapt their individuality to reflect the purpose of the group.

Groups have a life. In an Adventurer/Pathfinder/Ambassador or Youth club, a group comes into existence because of specific club goals. These could be:

1. Activity specific groups - The group comes together to participate in a club related activity such as being part of a camping group, doing honour and class work, or other specific tasks. In addition to the local church based clubs there are Conference/Mission events to attend often including group activities.
2. Organisationally initiated groups - The Adventist youth department hosts several youth clubs. The most well known are Adventurers, Pathfinders, Ambassadors and Senior Youth groups which operate on an annual calendar and are based in local churches. Each club has classes, units and staff who all form different groups that operate for different amounts of time.
3. Group Needs - Every group is made up of individuals who come together to complete a task that is safer and more interesting when performed with people who function well together. This blending of needs is the challenge of leading a group. The leader needs to recognise that each of these elements affect the others and the overall successful function of the group. This is illustrated in the diagram in Figure 1.1.

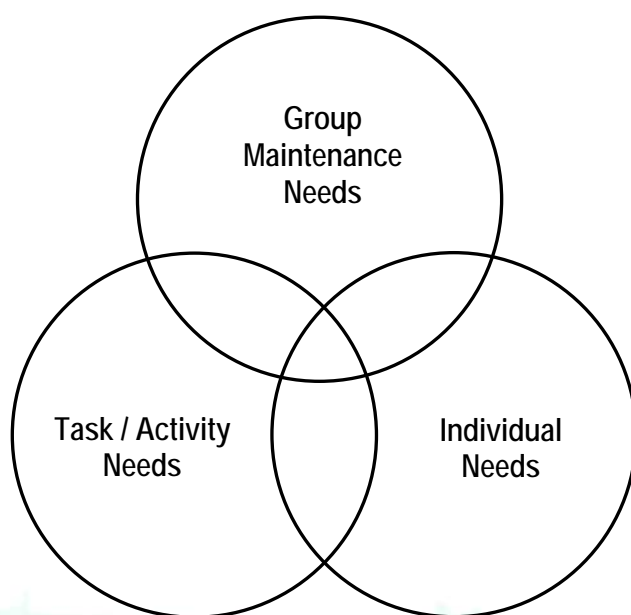


Figure 1.11: Needs.

¹ Bushwalking and Ski Touring Leadership p 231

Individual Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs model is vital for understanding the needs of a group (see Figure 1.2). Maslow said that a person will only climb another rung on the ladder if the rung below is secure. For example, lack of water overshadows the scenery or the sense of achievement, becoming the most important thing.

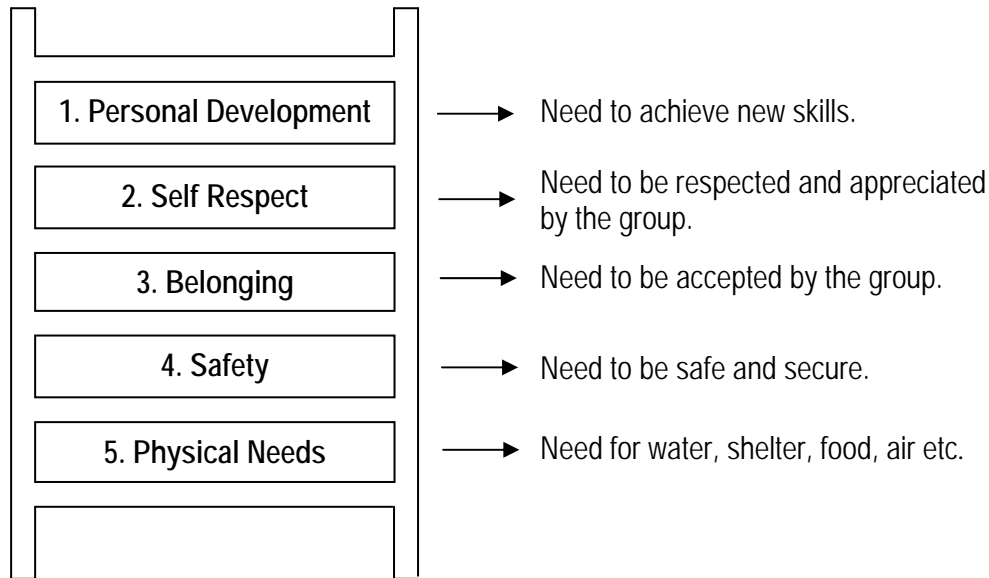


Figure 1.2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Group Needs

The group's existence is centred around the local club goals and structures that bring young people together over a yearly calendar. These specific group needs are to be:

- Identified - what the club purpose is.
- Planned for - including class work, club calendar events, etc.
- Prepared for - on a class and club level.
- Equipped for - so right equipment is available to ensure the smooth performance of the group events and activities.

The outcomes need to be accepted by the group so that everyone understands why they are together. This can be done by:

- Outlining the club program detailing all the needed information, such as:
 - ◆ Club purpose
 - ◆ Calendar dates
 - ◆ Location of meetings, camps,
 - ◆ Specific activities
 - ◆ Requirements of each class or level
 - ◆ Age related fitness activities
 - ◆ Club equipment needs
 - ◆ Logistics of transport
 - ◆ Club application forms

- Organising the club program well ahead of particular events
- Planning an information session so that people can fully comprehend the annual program. For example, the Pathfinder leader would inform the classes of what they need to achieve over a weekend and how to go about it.

Task Needs

- These are the elements that have to be maintained to keep the group functioning effectively:
- All of the programming preparation for meeting.
- Involvement in the class work by each participant
- The maintaining of the program requirements
- Completion of the requirements
- The assessing of the club program goals
- The termination of the group – includes
 - ◆ Evaluations after specific events as well as a year end evaluation.
 - ◆ Successful closure of each event or program.
 - ◆ Gear checking and storage

There are other elements of conducting a successful group over a year long program.

Spiritual Needs

Leaders can become so task and group-orientated that they forget the real purpose of being involved in the clubs. All members are God's creation and leaders need to allow for each individual to be aware of the Spiritual context. The group experience includes God.

The spiritual needs of the group include:

- Awareness that each person is a child of God
- Each person growing in their relationship with God and His church
- Setting aside time at each gathering for worship, meditation and spiritual development
- Respecting the Sabbath. Especially in regard to outdoor meetings as it becomes the 'Spiritual day' where the participants appreciate the joy of worshipping God.

The leader's role is to see every activity as an opportunity for spiritual growth and evangelism. The leader is challenged to keep a balance between the task, the group and the spiritual needs.

Maintenance Needs

Each group is fragile. The members need encouragement. The leader plays an important role in helping the group to develop. They can do this by:

- Being enthusiastic about the club activities
- Being organised for the activity with all plans in place, transport organised and correct equipment available
- Having the group accept the purpose of the meeting or activity
 - ◆ Developing appropriate goals
 - ◆ Outlining the objectives needed to achieve the goal
 - ◆ Allocating responsibilities within the group

To ensure that each member feels important:

- Share the responsibilities as much as possible, matching the responsibility with the skills the person has. For example, do this by asking a member with a current first aid certificate to be the first aid contact for the group.
- Ask the more experienced members to be mentors for the less experienced, and share the worship responsibilities around the group.
- In club meetings, include the unit or class in the planning process.

The biggest challenge is balancing the task needs with the group needs. A group by itself will focus on the task need. A leader's role is to maintain a balance between the challenge of the task and the needs of the group. Balancing these two correctly leads to a good functioning group that will support each other.

Establish a Group Performance Plan

In an ideal world where everyone has only one thing to do it would be logical to draw up a group performance plan. This would list all of the group plans including strategies to:

- Monitor the achievement of the plan
- Modify the plan if goals are not being met
- Reinforce good results
- Ways of evaluating the achievement of both goals and objectives

This process may not be practical for every event or meeting but a yearly plan is vital for the success of any group.

CHAPTER 2: Monitor Group Formation

Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee when he saw the two brothers, Simon (Peter) and Andrew fishing with a net. Jesus stopped, watched, and then called out *“Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people”* Matt. 4:18, 19.

Jesus then called another two fishermen brothers James and John in the same way. This is how, as the gospel records, the group known as disciples came into being. Jesus then had the challenge of moulding them into a working group.

Stages of Group Development²

As a group develops it progresses through stages. Knowing the stages and what is required to advance the group to the next stage helps the leader to facilitate the group's tasks and to nurture group development. The stages of group development are described below.

Stage 1: Forming

In this stage, group members begin to interact in a tentative way as they become familiar with the group's goals. Group members assess the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in the group. The leader plays a prominent role as members seek guidance and support.

Members also try to find out about one another. Their main concerns are what role they will play in the group and whether they will be accepted as part of the group.

To move to the next stage, members of the group are required to:

- take risks by expressing opinions which may prove to be contrary to the views of other group members
- make personal decisions about the role they will play in achieving the group's purpose.

Stage 2: Storming

Conflict can occur in the group during this stage. The conflict usually relates to how goals are achieved and leadership roles within the group. Group members may make personal attacks or express disagreement by appearing to be uninvolved.

To move to the next stage members of the group are required to:

- Establish clear roles for each member placing emphasis on group maintenance roles
- Listen empathically to the views of other group members
- Accept the possibility that they are wrong.

It is important to note that groups who do not resolve status struggles, do not move on to become effective in problem-solving, nor are members of the group satisfied with the group's performance. The group will fulfill its task but the solution is not likely to be an optimal one; they never satisfy all group members and, at best, are products of compromise. Decisions are made without deep commitment.

² SRX GRP 001A Learning Guide pp56,57

Stage 3: Norming

Members begin to feel more comfortable in the group and goals, tasks and roles are defined. The leader's role becomes less prominent. A team spirit emerges as members share information and develop a positive attitude to the group's endeavours.

To move to the next stage each group member is required to:

- have confidence in their capacity to satisfactorily perform their own role
- trust others to complete the tasks assigned them.

Stage 4: Performing

As relationships have been formed, and individuals are able to recognise and use each other's strengths, during this phase the group becomes actively involved in achieving goals. A well functioning group will spend most of its time in this phase. The leader is involved only as a peer or resource person and the group is able to achieve far more than the sum of the individuals within it.

Stage 5: Mourning

This stage occurs when it becomes obvious to members that the group's role is coming to an end. It may also occur for individuals who leave the group at an earlier stage in its development. In this stage, members evaluate the achievements of the group and finalise outstanding issues. There is usually some confusion and concern about disengagement from the relationships formed over the life of the group.

To disengage members are required to:

- accept that the group is terminating
- plan for the future by evaluating the knowledge and skills gained that can be transferred to work with other groups
- assert one's individuality and separateness from the group.

As a leader of a group you can identify where the group is at from its level of understanding. This knowledge becomes the criteria against which the leader can assess where the group is at. The stage of the group can be observed in the behaviour of the group toward each other and their attitude to the task. Such things as:

- Cooperation
- Effective communication
- Positive conflict resolution
- Communication to group goals
- Positive attitude toward each other

CHAPTER 3: Group Commitment

The group of Pathfinders arrive for the over night campout ready for action. For example they are sea-kayakers helping to unload the boat and are waiting for their leader. What the leaders say will be vital for the whole adventure. In this chapter the subject of communication skills will be developed.

Assertiveness

A person behaving assertively is able to communicate their feelings of self worth by the way they behave in a group setting. They seek to have their goals and needs fulfilled but are at the same time concerned with helping others to have their goals met.

Using 'I' statements is one way to behave assertively. An 'I' statement is a clear and structured statement of the way an experience is perceived. These statements do not threaten or blame other parties in the group.

Listening

Listening is a skill, which complements assertiveness. Listening involves hearing what the group member has to say and understanding the situation from their point of view. Listening is one way of providing support to group members.

Clear Communication

Written and spoken language is the means of giving and receiving information in groups. It should be:

- *Clear:* Information is relevant and easily understood, it should also be presented logically and sequentially.
- *Concise:* Information is stated in the fewest possible words.
- *Complete:* All information needed to make a decision is presented.
- *Correct:* Information presented is well researched and accurate.

Questioning

Questions are used in a group situation to start discussion, to clarify information and to obtain responses. Two types of questions can be asked: open and closed questions.

Open questions are used to:

- Encourage the other team members to explain their ideas in more detail or express their opinions more clearly.
- Example: Why do you think we should make it a Two day trip rather than a three day trip?

Closed questions are used to:

- Obtain specific and usually factual information. They can usually be answered with one or two words.
- Example: When is that campsite available?

Strategies for Building a Team

1. Share needed information - Share with the group the facts, and help them to understand the challenges and appreciate the excitement of being part of the group. Tell them:
 - the facts about the meetings or activities
 - How they will benefit from their involvement
 - what skills they will learn or develop
 - the experience they will gain
 - the experience is unique
2. Open Communication - Share all of the details using all of the communication skills. Keep everyone informed and check that they understand what is meant. Encourage open communication for the entire group.
3. Constructive feed back - This is an important part of the communication process. When someone is speaking, focus on that person and respond using all of the communication skills of:
 - eye contact
 - reflective stance
 - appropriate responses
 - clarifying responses
4. Develop Trust, Confidence and Ownership - This is mainly true in the early stages of the group process. It involves sharing the planning and organisation that is going into the specific aspect of the program.
5. Personal contact with each of the participants - Personal contact is easily achieved in a club setting, as there is time to get to know each individual in the group by name. It is important to develop a relationship with each individual in the group early so when the group experiences stress or difficulty, the group has confidence and trust in the leaders. While the group is functioning, the leader can continue to establish trust and confidence by:
 - Spending time with individuals and finding out their interests and dreams
 - Demonstrating skills and knowledge (in a positive way – encouraging growth)
 - Being enthusiastic – especially during difficult circumstances
 - Being trusting – acknowledge the skills available in the group. Support the group and be part of the group development by naming and tailoring work to the needs of the group.

CHAPTER 4: Facilitating Group Processes

Every group needs a leader so that it can function.

“Without wise leadership, a nation fails, with wise counsellors there is safety” Prov 11:14

Leadership is vital in all youth clubs. The core purpose of leadership is to influence the group to move towards a goal that benefits all of the members of the group. Leadership is a function that is available for any person willing to be involved in making an impact on someone else.

Christian leadership involves more than demonstrating skills. It promotes modelling a personal relationship with Jesus. It is more than providing a mantle of safety for outdoor activities. Instead it maintains an interest in the personal needs of each individual.

“Leaders are not called by God to stand behind a program and push. They are called by God to go before (others) and lead. They move others by example, not by the power of their office”.³

Leadership Styles

Group leaders are called on to be adaptable in different situations. Their actions may range from listening quietly to someone to having to speak sternly to the group to achieve something. Leadership styles need to change to adapt to Adventurers, Pathfinders, Ambassadors and Youth groups.

A leader needs to be aware of the main types of leadership. These are summarised as:

1. Authoritarian Leadership (autocratic, dictatorial)

- a. Determines goals and policies and wants the group to choose the goal he/she has chosen.
- b. Shows more interest in the subject matter (content) than in the people (process).
- c. Shows aggressive attitude
- d. Hostility, resistance and resentment can emerge
- e. Is aloof from active group participation except when demonstrating

2. Laissez-Faire Leadership (permissive)

- f. Doesn't prepare and lets things drift
- g. Doesn't seem to care
- h. Makes no attempt to appraise or regulate the course of events
- i. Lacks courage in making decisive plans
- j. Gives freedom to the group to do as they like

3. Democratic Leadership (group-centred, shared or functional)

- k. Accepts the fact that the leadership is a function of the whole group and not only of one individual
- l. Creates a sense of security and belonging in the group
- m. Ensures that other members have the opportunity of leadership
- n. Allows individuals initiative and fosters personality growth
- o. A group will say of a good leader who has finished the goal achieved, “we did this ourselves”.⁴

³ Quoted in Building Youth Ministry. B Gane. p70.

⁴ Pathfinder Leadership Resource Manual Basic Staff Training p 56,57

The Democratic leadership style is the most effective method of leadership. In this style of leadership the relationship between the individual and the leader is paramount. Here the leader is an observer and open to modelling. The leader is able to directly influence the group and meet the needs of specific individuals. The following text represents the Biblical principles that we as leaders should follow,

“And anyone who wants to become first among you must be servant to all”. (Mark 10:44).

A leader must be open to learning. The Democratic or relational style means that they are open to using the knowledge of a group without losing their leadership role.

4. Relational Leadership

The relational leader is interested in responding to the needs of the group as well as focusing on achieving the task. Relational leaders are prepared to modify tasks if needed to cater for personal needs of individuals within the group.

Relational leaders create an open communication environment where everyone develops trust and appreciation for each other. The leader's aim is for the group to have positive memories that aid in personal development, self-confidence, and skills.

Relational leadership is ideal for Youth Leaders. This type of leadership enhances the memory events and models the positive aspects of Christianity.

Relational Leadership is:-

- Authentic: Be genuine and transparent. This is critical to young people of all ages, who judge leaders on who they really are.
- Affirming: to all members of the group
 - ◆ Become familiar with each group member
 - ◆ Praise each group member at every opportunity
 - ◆ Acknowledge individual uniqueness
- Available to the group
 - ◆ Be prepared to stop and listen to each individual
 - ◆ Be aware of the 'open times' at campfires, camps, driving or when relaxing after an event.
 - ◆ As a group leader, listen to peoples' stories.
- Enthusiastic
 - ◆ About Christianity
 - ◆ Celebrate the big moments
 - ◆ Never lose sight of the child within.
- Trustworthy
 - ◆ Employ safety standards to protect the group.
 - ◆ Be open to the personal changes that take place as young people mature and adapt your relationship accordingly.⁵

5. Visionary Leadership

Assimilate the contributions of the group so that the group achievement will be greater than what they could achieve alone. The leader should try to reach early agreement on the purpose of the

⁵ adapted from presentation notes 'The importance of the Relationship' and 'How do I grow Young People?' , Lanelle Cobbin
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group. As a leader, have some possible contingencies for outdoor activities if things don't quite work out the way you expect.⁶

Differences

Find the best possible way that the personal differences can compliment each other. In good groups, contrary opinions become assets rather than liabilities. It's an advantage to have risk takers as well as cautious people in a group to balance out each other.

Delegate Authority

Allow people to feel part of the group and create a genuine bond through building trust. Create an atmosphere where the group cares for each other as individuals.

Recognize Potential Problems

Problems are a part of group life so adapt as needed.

Create and Communicate a Vision of Success

Inspire the group with the outcomes of doing a job well, and the long term benefits of working well together.

Caring Leadership

Be genuinely interested in each of the members of the group. Being part of a group is an opportunity to help people grow and learn. Caring leadership is:

- Being vulnerable – sharing some of your own experiences
- Following through.
- Letting go of judgements and being tolerant of others
- Acknowledging others for their strengths and contributions⁷

Self Care in Leadership

- Remember that every mistake is a learning experience.
- Reflect Jesus' attitude.
- Caring builds trust and provides a vital link between participants and leaders.\
- Caring is a great way to show the gospel to other people. John says: "No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us and his love has been brought to full expression through us". 1 John 4:12

Whatever leadership style is chosen, remember:

- Be natural, not someone else. Use personal strengths to compensate for weaknesses.
- Never practice bullying – it is never an acceptable leadership style.

Problem solving

When a leader has to change plans it is important to:

- Make a decision
- Have a reason
- Share the new plans or the modified plans

⁶ adapted from 'Outdoor Leadership', John Graham p121

⁷ Adapted from 'Outdoor Leadership' – John Graham p 75

- Allow feedback
- Adapt if appropriate
- Lead in the new direction

Safety Issues

The leader will maintain the safety of the group within their skill levels. Maintaining safety is vital for the development of the group and trust in a leader. Remember to always communicate to the whole group.

Different Individual Perspectives

It is vital that the rights of each group member are respected. The strength of the group is in bringing together these differences, and each learning from each other's perspective. A leader needs to respond to the following specific needs:

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Cultural background
- Fear

If it will not affect the overall safety of the group, allowances need to be made for the individual. The leader needs to:

- Talk with the individual
- Encourage them as much as possible
- Be positive at all times so that the individual who has this fear does not feel removed from the group
- Allow time for the individual and group to overcome the problem
- Respect the individual and develop an alternative way of getting around the problem.

This is one of the tough situations that a leader has to deal with. This is where the individual needs become greater than the other needs. If it is a safety issue the situation needs to be handled as best as possible to maintain group safety.

Inappropriate Behaviour

The following behaviours are considered inappropriate and if discovered during a program or club activity would be reason for discipline:

- Drugs/Alcohol/Smoking
- Sex (Inappropriate)/Nudity/Pornography
- Constant use of mobile phones and other electronic devices

CHAPTER 5: Manage Conflict

Effective conflict management is one of the major reasons for group success. The challenge is to use negative conflict as a positive experience. Good conflict should focus on the issue and not the personalities involved. It is a time of testing new ideas, developing programs, providing involvement in the programs, and is an opportunity to develop new creative ideas. Jesus managed conflict with his disciples by always keeping the focus on the issue being dealt with. Negative conflict is where the clash between two opposing groups or individuals keeps people apart, and forms a barrier in the group, affecting their ability to function effectively.

Types of Conflict

There are four main types of conflict. These are:

1. Internal conflict – When a person feels that their expectations in the group are not being met e.g. a Pathfinder may feel a hike is too easy.
2. External conflict – When two people or more are in conflict. Misunderstandings between group members can lead to feelings of discomfort or tension between them.
3. Realistic conflict – When the people involved in the conflict focus on the problem and believe that the differences can be resolved. They seek to solve the problem and get on with the program.
4. Unrealistic conflict – When people are not prepared to change. This is the worst kind of conflict to deal with.

Causes of Conflict

The challenge for a leader is to be alert to the things that could cause conflict, and to deal with them before the conflict diverts the purpose of the group. Sources of conflict may include:-:

1. Personality differences
When a person or groups of people have personal characteristics that create conflict. This could be in the way that people talk, act or the attitude that they have toward the activity. This may come from an outside source that has nothing to do with the activity but flows into it simply because the people are in the group. It may also be because of opposing value and belief systems.

Response: The leader either ignores it, or encourages everyone to focus on the activity. The challenge is for the individuals, as Christians, to realise that they are all children of God.

2. Communication breakdown
Leaders may not consider all the factors in a situation. This is problematic if there is a known danger that could affect the group. Poor communication may also occur when the real reason for the activity may be for a different purpose than was perceived.

Individuals or group members also may have private agendas that they are not willing to share.

Response: The leader sets the example in this. Keep all of the members of the group or club informed of everything that is relevant to them. Encourage the entire group to be as open as possible in their dealings with each other. This is especially within the staff circle. They must be the first to know of any developments in the program.

3. Unrealistic goals

Leaders or groups sometimes set goals that are beyond the abilities of the whole group. Leaders can also place too high a workload on the staff.

Response: The leader needs to be honest with the expectations of the group. They need to set either skill or physical standards before the program. There is a need to be supportive of the staff and evenly share the responsibilities expected. This is very important in a volunteer situation.

4. Unexpected crises

This could be anything that could happen on an activity that is outside the anticipated. It could be personal, an accident or an unexpected physical event or situation.

Response: The leader needs to confidently lead the group through the situation. They either retreat from it, or manage it to the best of the group's abilities. The leader seeks cooperation from the group.

5. Rigid attitude to change

This is when leaders or group members are not prepared to adapt when the situation calls for it.

Response; Leaders need to be prepared to adapt the program because of the environment in which outdoor activities takes place. The challenge is to keep the entire group agreeing with some of the changes that should take place. Communication skills are very important.

If the personal safety of clients or staff may be threatened, then the leader must quickly and firmly take control of the managing of the situation. It is vital that in the Risk Management of the activity an Accident Procedure be already outlined. The leader or responsible person needs to follow these procedures as closely as possible.

6. Personal morals

This is when other members of the group challenge a personal belief system in either the standard of safety, relationships or attitudes.

Response; It is important that the rights of every individual are respected. The activities conducted need to be aligned to the lifestyle standards that are established in the Bible. Safety standards must be of the highest order.

7. Client complaints

This is when a participant has some negative observation to make about what is happening in the group.

Response: Leaders need to listen honestly and respond in a respectful way.

8. Limited Resources

This is when the group size for the activity is greater than the equipment available to maintain the safety standards. It could also be when there are not enough basic resources for all of the people to be involved in the activity. For example there may not be enough canoes or inadequate quantity or sizing of lifejackets for the group to go canoeing together.

Response: Leaders need to organise the equipment before the activity so that there are no disappointments. It is vital to get the details of the group before they arrive.

Three Basic Stages of Conflict Development

1. **Misunderstanding** – Generally caused by poor communication.
2. **Tension** – when parties feel negative about a person/s or situation.
3. **Crisis** – The conflict is unresolved and the parties may be hostile to each other.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is the process of working through a conflict to reach agreement between the opposing ideas, interests, values or groups of people. Being able to deal with conflict is one of the most important skills that a manager needs to possess. Everyone, no matter what his or her position or occupation, has to deal with conflict at some time. However, many people find this a difficult task to carry out successfully. It does require quite a high level of skill, but this can be learnt. You also need to be aware of factors within individuals and in a workplace environment that may contribute to the development of conflict.⁸ Conflicts are not always resolved but they can be managed well. It is more important to concentrate on managing the conflict well rather than to focus solely on reaching agreement.

Procedures for Dealing with Conflict – Conflict Management Styles

Conflict disrupts the opportunity to share Jesus within the context of the outdoors. Paul challenges us as leaders to *“do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible”* Romans 12:18 NLT. Matthew records Jesus' advice in Matt 18:15-18 of the importance of managing conflict. As leaders, teachers, and youth specialists, we need to be aware of the many ways of managing conflict. These conflicts can disrupt the ministry purpose of groups.

These 'ways of behaving' are called conflict resolution techniques or conflict management styles. There is no **correct** conflict style but one conflict style might be more appropriate than others in a specific conflict situation or if a certain outcome is required.

Five Conflict Resolution Techniques

The five conflict resolution techniques for handling conflict outlined below are possible responses to conflict situations.

1. **Denial/withdrawal**
Using this style, people attempt to get rid of conflict by denying that it exists. They stay away from the conflict issues and from the people they are in conflict with. They believe that if they avoid the conflict, it will go away and that if they acknowledge it, it may become worse. It is a lose/lose conflict result.

The approach is 'It will sort itself out'. 'Don't worry, there probably isn't a real problem anyway'.

Denial/withdrawal may be useful where:

- The issue will be resolved without need for intervention.
2. **Suppression/Smoothing**
People using this style attempt to play down differences in values or interests. The conflict may be discussed but the real issues are not brought out into the open. Conflict is smoothed over

⁸ Chisholm Institute. NCS005R Dealing with Conflict Learner Guide, from the Certificate III in Management. June 2000 p9
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because it may result in damaged relationships on this activity, but the issues will arise again especially if the participants belong to the same group or club. It is a lose/lose outcome.

The approach is 'We don't argue in this group'. 'We run a happy ship here'.

Suppression may be useful where:

- Maintaining a good relationship is preferred to conflict over an unimportant issue. On an outdoor activity there is only a limited time that the conflict can be smoothed over or ignored.

3. Power/dominance/forcing

This style is used by people to force others to accept their solutions to the conflict. They see their goals in the conflict as being more important than the goals of others. They are not interested in maintaining relationships with others and assume that conflicts are settled by one party winning and one party losing. They can dominate conflict situations by using their authority or position, by using majority voting or by pressuring minority groups.

The approach is 'I have decided that we will...'. 'You will...'. 'If you don't come with us, we'll...'.

Power/dominance may be useful when:

- Quick decisive action is essential, such as during emergencies or an OH&S situation.
- Unpopular decisions, such as cost cuttings need implementing.

4. Compromise

People using this style choose to give up part of their goals and persuade others involved in the conflict to give up part of their goals. They seek a solution to conflict where both sides gain something. The conflicting parties reach a middle ground between two extreme positions. This is a win/win situation where the combatants do it in an atmosphere of good will. Where there is an atmosphere of mistrust then it could end up being a win/lose or more often a lose/win outcome.

The approach is 'I'll give a bit – you give a bit and we will meet halfway'.

Compromise may be useful when:

- Both parties consider their goals important but want to avoid long drawn out conflict
- Quick but mutually agreeable solutions have to be made under time pressure; this is important on extended outdoor activities.

5. Integration/collaboration

People who use this management style, view conflict as a problem to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of others involved in the conflict. The aim is to achieve a win/win approach where everyone is happy. This approach could be a time-consuming process and may not be appropriate in some circumstances such as an emergency or when limited time is available. The approach is "Let's talk this through'. 'Let's get together and thrash this out'.

This style may be useful when:

- A mutual solution is required and concerns are too important to be compromised
- There is plenty of time to reach agreement.⁹

⁹ NSW Department of Education. NAD3006 Dealing with Conflict Learner Guide, from the Certificate III in Sport & Recreation
New Skills Development / Group Skills
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Major Dysfunctional Conflict

The stages above provide a structure that helps the people in a conflict to identify the issues, and to generate and implement possible solutions. Working through the stages will not guarantee that the conflict will be resolved. However, the stages do provide a framework that allows conflict to be managed well.¹⁰

The Bible outline of conflict management, as outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18: 15 - 20 is also excellent to follow.

- Talk to the person involved
- Take another person to resolve the problem
- Take it to the church and let them make a judgement

¹⁰ NSW Department of Education. NAD3006 Dealing with Conflict Learner Guide, from the Certificate III in Sport & Recreation
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