

# GROUP STANDARDS & MANAGEMENT

## **What is a standard?**

- Group Standards are our agreements about how our group will operate.
- By this we mean: how we will treat each other, how we will handle problems that occur in our group, how we will respond to members that act in ways that violate the agreements we make. Group Standards are our way of assuring that we have the kind of group with which everyone can agree.
- Group Standards should not be seen as a product, or a list of agreements. Group Standards are a process by which we begin forming a cohesive team through dialogue, compromise, and commitment. Group Standards evolve, and therefore the Group Standards process is never finished. Because Group Standards evolve, we should not think of them as a task to be completed but as a means by which our group interactions occur.

## **How are standards developed?**

- Group Standards are developed through group discussion and consensus. Through this format each of us is afforded the opportunity to assert our point-of-view. An underlying tenet of this system is the belief that in order to have one's needs met, one must accept responsibility for participation in the system designed to negotiate one's needs. Through implementing the Group Standards model, we are providing ourselves the opportunity to learn that we are responsible for our experience, and we are not simply passive recipients of experience.

## **How are standards set?**

- The way the standards will be set is that we will each be given a chance to state what we want from the group. We will list all of our ideas and then discuss each. Our discussion will focus on:
  - Whether the idea is practical, or if not, how it could be practical;
  - Whether it is in everyone's best interest or if not, how it could be changed so that it is in everyone's best interest;
  - Whether everyone can agree to live according to that idea.
- We may want to get an idea of the support for a suggestion by asking if anyone opposes the idea.
  - Remember to express rationale for various points of view so that others can attempt to understand.
  - If we don't anticipate a problem with a suggested standard, let's consider the "what ifs."
- Our goal is to reach consensus (everyone agrees without voting). If consensus can't be reached, let's reword the standard so everyone can agree.
- As we agree with an idea it will become a standard for everyone to live by.

*Remember: Group Standards system is not a way to control the group. It is a process by which we form an understanding of how we want to live together.*

## **What about accountability?**

- The only way the standards will help make our group satisfying for everyone is if each member of our group is responsible to every other member of the group for adhering to the standards. If any one of us allows someone to act in a way that causes us to be dissatisfied with living in the group then we are contributing to the problem. We each have responsibility for reminding ourselves and others of our agreement. This means that a member who is aware that a standard has been or is being violated has a responsibility to discuss the violation with a member who is violating the standard. This

conversation should be an attempt to ask the other party to cooperate in keeping the group as everyone wanted it.

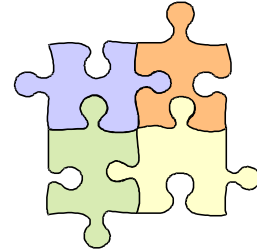
- Do we feel comfortable approaching each other to discuss Group Standards issues?
- How will we approach others who we believe may be violating a standard?

***It is our responsibility to negotiate agreements about the future of our organization.***

## GROUP STANDARDS

Things to consider:

- What can I give to this group?
- What can I get from this group?
- How would I like to be treated in this group?



1. How will we communicate with each other?
2. How will we make decisions?
3. What are our expectations about meeting attendance?
4. What are our expectations about completing assignments on time?
5. What are our expectations about bad mouthing fellow group members?
6. What are our expectations about listening versus interrupting?
7. What are our expectations about how much each person speaks and whether everyone has to participate?
8. How will we deal with conflict? What will we do when we disagree with each other?
9. What are our expectations of our advisor?
10. How will we share work?
11. How will we treat others who are not part of our group?
12. What other standards do we want to set for ourselves in this group?