

# Dynamics of Group Decision-Making Study Guide

## How to Use This Study Guide

The Study Guide for this course is designed to help you take notes as you're taking the online course "Dynamics of Group Decision-Making". It is organized in sections that mirror the elements of the course, with plenty of room to make notes and capture your learning.

The use of the Study Guide is optional. Research shows that different people learn differently, and for many, the act of writing something down as you are learning helps to solidify the information in your brain. If you find the Study Guide helpful, use it. If not, feel free to omit it from your learning process.

## Course Overview – Dynamics of Group Decision-Making

Do you dread meetings, or love them? It may often feel like it's easier to make decisions by yourself rather than as part of a group, but while that may seem to take less time, in this course, we want to discuss how groups can indeed be smart, dynamic, and the source of good decisions. Groups – rather than individuals alone – have been shown to think more widely about decisions and consider more options – which often lead to better outcomes! That doesn't mean that group decision-making is always a walk in the park, however: group dynamics can be difficult under the influence of strong personalities, weak processes, and factors like time pressure which lead to groupthink. Clarity, intention, and clear process are essential to making good group decisions, along with prepared group members, encouraged group participation, and documented group input all working together to lead to the best possible outcome. In this course you'll learn how to support the groups you are part of in making smarter and more informed decisions together.

## Learning Objectives – Dynamics of Group Decision-Making

By the end of this course, you will understand the following:

- Why group decisions are important
- How to make decisions that are beneficial to the entire group
- Pitfalls to avoid when making decisions as a group
- What brainstorming is and how it can be utilized for effective group decision-making

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### What Makes Group Decisions Worth It?

*African proverb:* "If you want to go fast, go \_\_\_\_\_. If you want to go far, go \_\_\_\_\_."

#### Advantages

Advantage	Notes
Diverse input	
More options	
Shared responsibility	

#### Disadvantages

Disadvantage	Notes
Time	
Groupthink	
Polarization	
Riskier Decisions	

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## Are Groups Smarter Than Individuals?

## Journaling Activity: What Went Well?

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### Three Strategies to Help Groups Make Good Decisions

#### 1. Understanding the Life Cycle of a Group

#	Stage	Notes
1	<b>Forming</b>	
2	<b>Storming</b>	
3	<b>Norming</b>	
4	<b>Performing</b>	

#### 2. Set the Ground Rules to Create Group Norms

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### 3. Determine How You'll Go About Making Decisions

#	Way	Notes
1	<b>Voting</b>	
2	<b>Consensus</b>	
3	<b>Consultative leadership</b>	
4	<b>Command leadership</b>	

### Journaling Activity: Group Analysis – What Do You Need?

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### Guidelines for Brainstorming

#### Principles of Brainstorming:

Principle	Notes
Everyone should share	
Brainstorming is not a way to make decisions	
Be transparent	

#### Four Ways to Elicit Group Input

#	Way	Notes
1	Dialectical inquiry	
2	Nominal group technique	
3	Individual brainstorming	
4	Rolestorming	

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## Journaling Activity: What Do You Prefer?

### Discussion Questions

Discussion questions are used by workgroups who are taking courses concurrently and want to engage in a conversation about the course content. The use of discussion questions is optional.

1. What kinds of decisions does the group make? How was this role decided? i.e. bylaws, assignment from leadership, as volunteers, etc. Can you name three benefits to how the group reaches decisions?
2. Has the group ever stale-mated on a topic? If so, how did you resolve it?
3. Review the four life stages (forming, storming, norming, and performing. [Review here](#)) and identify where you group lands. What characteristics of that stage does your group have?
4. Have you set ground rules for your group? Quickly go through the list under point #2 [here](#) and ask yourself if your group has each rule, or one you consider to be similar. Answer “yes” or “no” to each one. For the “yes” answers, how well is each rule working? For each “no” answer, would it improve group functioning to add such a rule?
5. How does your group elicit input? How does that compare to the four ways described [here](#) in this course? If you use multiple strategies for gaining input, what are they and how do you choose to use that process for any given decision the group must make?