Stages of Group Development

Forming
Major issues: inclusion, individual identity
Do I want to be here? Will my needs be met?
Am I safe? Will they like me?
Member behavior:
Withdrawal, reservation
Politeness, formality, dependence, awkwardness
Testing, humor, reactive behavior, silence
Appropriate leader role: Parent
Explain rules, goals, purpose
Accept, nurture, take care of needs
Initiation activities
Develop bonding and trust
Model desired norms: openness, honesty, clarity

Norming
Major issues: group identity, norms
Do we cooperate or compete?
What are the rules? What are the norms?
How do we make decisions?
Individual vs. group responsibility, roles
Member behavior:
Testing, experimenting, power struggles
Establishing routines
Failure to commit to action plan
Formation of cliques, conflict emerges but isn't dealt with
Appropriate leader role: Teacher
Teach skills, empower group, be patient
Model and reinforce behaviors
Structure and role model caring, decision making and effective communication

Performing
Major issues: productivity, cohesion
Feelings of intimacy, pride, strong identity
Accepting responsibility, effective conflicting
Supportive, involved, energized, independent
Member behavior:
Cooperation, enjoyment
Effective doers, productive group
Deal directly and undefensively with conflict
Strong sense of group purpose and identity
Appropriate leader role: Reinforcer
Back off, let them go
Focus on generalizing learnings
Provide opportunity to share success with others
Challenge them
Be a mirror for them; reflect back their growth

Storming
Major issues: conflict, power
Anger, rebellion, disillusionment
Loss of purpose, confusion, negativitism
Questioned commitment to participation
Increased participation and energy
Member behavior:
Attacks on group leaders
Polarization of group members
Confusion and disillusionment
Power struggles and testing of group norms
Open honest dealing
Appropriate leader role: Safe Harbor
Don't panic, become authoritative, solve problems
Teach, role model feedback, clarify issues
Provide structure, direction and perspective
Manage stress, protect emotional safety

Termination
Major issues: letting go, fear of leaving
Nostalgia, loss, grieving, loss of intimacy, denial of success
Anxiety about what's next, application of learnings
Member behavior:
Withdrawal, blame, anxiety, sentiment, breakdown in skills, floundering, detachment
Appropriate leader role: Coach
Support, affirm, focus on positive, solidify learnings, validate experience
Prepare participants: action plans, ceremonies, talk about transition and closure

Source: The Napier Group 2014