The Small Group Socialization Process

Chapter 2

Individuals Join Groups for Three Reasons

1. Attraction Theory
2. Interpersonal Communication Motives
3. Lack of Volition

1. Attraction Theory

1. Individuals are attracted to the group’s activities
2. Individuals are attracted to the group’s goals
3. Individuals are attracted to the prestige associated with membership in the group
4. Individuals are attracted to group members
2. Interpersonal Communication Motives

People often initiate and maintain interactions in order to satisfy their interpersonal needs.

Six Interpersonal Communication Motives

1. Inclusion
   Communicate with others to have a sense of belonging

2. Affection
   Communicate with others to feel liked and to like others

3. Control
   Communicate with others to have the power to manipulate the environment

4. Escape
   Communicate with others to avoid other activities or stressful situations

5. Pleasure
   Communicate with others to have fun

6. Relaxation
   Communicate with others to unwind and lower anxiety
3. Lack of Volition

Some people join groups because they have no choice.

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Small Group Socialization

Three Approaches to Defining Socialization

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Definitions of Socialization

1. When newcomers become part of the group’s patterns of activities

2. As a reciprocal process that affects both individual members and the group as a whole

3. As a two-way process of influence and change whereby group members use verbal and nonverbal messages to create a new and unique group culture
The five phases illustrate how communication functions to influence socialization processes.

* Antecedent phase
* Anticipatory phase
* Encounter phase
* Assimilation phase
* Exit phase

Antecedent phase
Members will be influenced by each other’s beliefs, attitudes, communicative and personality traits, age, sex, and race
Model of Small Group Socialization

Anticipatory phase

Represents the pre-expectations individuals form about group membership

Also considers that existing groups have expectations about new group members

Model of Small Group Socialization

Encounter phase

Group members come together for the first time

Model of Small Group Socialization

Assimilation phase

Members accept the established group culture and begin to identify with the group and its members

“We-ness” or “group-ness” occurs
**Model of Small Group Socialization**

**Exit phase**

The end of the group task, or when individuals leave the group

Affects how the group and the individual members confront life without that group experience

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**Outcomes of Socialization**

Cohesion, Consensus, Communication Satisfaction, & Loneliness

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**Outcomes of Socialization**

Describe how members and the group as a whole feel about how they cooperated and succeeded in completing goals.
Outcomes of Socialization

Cohesion
A member reaching an acceptable level of desire to stay in the group.

Consensus
All group members agreeing with and committing to the group’s decision.

Communication Satisfaction
Describes members who walk away from group meetings or from the group feeling positively fulfilled from the experience.
Outcomes of Socialization

Loneliness

Feeling of powerlessness some members have from not being able or allowed to participate in the group’s process

Socialization Guidelines

Ideas for the successful socialization of members to help ensure success, from the perspective of both the new member and the group.

Socialization Guidelines

Individual level: New member should:

1. Embrace the values, norms, and behaviors established in the group
2. Acquire the skills and knowledge needed to assume appropriate roles
3. Learn what is and what is not important
4. Move from a non-performing member to a contributing member
Socialization Guidelines

Group level: Group members should:

1. Recruit individuals who will fit in and contribute to the attainment of group goals
2. Initiate new members in formal orientation sessions or individually in work groups
3. Include the new group member in group activities
4. Engage in a mentoring relationship with the new member

A Final Note

One downside to socialization is that for optimal socialization to occur, trust must be established among group members.