WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Help a Team Through a Transition

A provisional team-development lens and a practical support action.

25 minutes | Tuckman · Forming / Storming / Norming / Performing / Adjourning

Use it in three moves

1. Describe what changed and how people are experiencing it. Start with observations before choosing a stage label.

2. Use the team-development stages as possible lenses. Look for the support needed now: clarity, room for disagreement, coordination, or a good ending.

3. Try one agreement and review it after a real work cycle. Teams can revisit earlier difficulties as circumstances change.

What changed in the team?

Name membership, task, authority, or context changes. Different parts of a team may be experiencing different things.

What do you actually observe?

Describe behavior and work consequences without assigning motives.

Try a stage as a lens

Forming: orientation. Storming: differences and roles. Norming: shared agreements. Performing: coordinated work. Adjourning: ending and transition. Stages are not a fixed timetable.

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YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

Choose support that fits the evidence

Clarify purpose, make disagreement discussable, agree roles, remove coordination barriers, or plan a good ending.

Make one agreement visible

Who agrees, who owns it, and what will change in daily work?

Look again after the next cycle

Ask whether the support helped; do not force a team into the next stage.

A question for me

Who is expected to know something we have never made explicit?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

What changed in the team?

Two new colleagues joined while responsibility for customer triage moved into the team.

What do you actually observe?

People ask different managers for approval. New colleagues are quiet when priorities are disputed.

Try a stage as a lens

Forming and storming are useful lenses: the task and authority are unclear, and differences are emerging.

Choose support that fits the evidence

Map the triage decision boundary and invite each person to name a confusing handoff. Make room for written input before discussion.

Make one agreement visible

The service owner decides urgent priority conflicts; the team can decide routine order within the agreed criteria.

Look again after the next cycle

Review after two weeks and after the next membership change. Keep what helps and revise unclear boundaries.

The thinking behind it

A transition changes who knows the unwritten rules. Make those rules discussable instead of mistaking familiarity for capability.

Bruce Tuckman described forming, storming, norming, and performing; adjourning was later added with Mary Ann Jensen. This original guide uses the stages as revisable lenses. Teams can revisit needs or develop differently; the model is not a diagnosis or guaranteed sequence.

Original paper · Developmental sequence in small groups

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne