Organization Development and Change in 21st Century
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Lecture - 12
Design of Specific Interventions to
Tackle Different Challenges of Different Teams

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So, let us look at the type 1 problems of the teams and what are their solutions. Generally, type 1 problems, which are related to team building happen in the forming and storming stage of the team function. Forming phase is when you actually constitute the teams based on some objective data like competency, temperament, past performance, experience, etcetera; and storming stage is when group or team starts working towards finalizing the final norms and objectives.

So storming phase is when there are extensive debates about what to pursue and how to pursue. In this type of problem, the focus of the intervention is generally goal and role clarification related to task structure and looking at the group composition. There are some simple interventions like expectation setting, team objective setting, performance and reward mechanism. These are simple, but very important interventions.

Generally, a team with a specific objective must start working with a clear team charter. A team charter has the expectations from each other, the team objectives and how the

reward and recognition will be shared within the team. These are simple things but if you overlook these things, that may create problems in future. Then there are some more complex interventions like team role analysis. So, these are the 9 roles being identified by Belbin.

Generally, people have liking for some or other role over others. What we have found is that for any team to be successful and to complete its task, there has to be a shaper completer and implementer.

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So, people with the action-oriented role mostly become more effective leaders, people having a preference for people oriented roles generally become good collegial team members. And people who have a preference for cerebral roles generally develop as experts and team members rely on specific expert advice from them.

However, the most successful managers are those who can embrace larger number of roles in their general working. Mostly the team leaders have to have action-oriented role prominently in their personality. So, team role analysis by Belbin is one framework, but there are many other frameworks looking at the different typology of the roles essentially with the similar philosophy.

Now, we will look at another method called Role Negotiation. Role negotiation is also a method of OD intervention particularly suitable for the team situation.

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To understand role negotiation as an OD intervention, we must understand that what is the difference between role and job? We all get job offers, but what we have to do in the organization, what we have to accomplish in the organization, what we have to deliver in the organization are the roles. So, what is the difference between job and role? Job is related to your individual responsibilities, but a role is always in relation to others.

So, a role always includes informal understandings, agreements, expectations, and arrangements with others along with the formal job. The relational component and the psychological component when combined with job generally becomes role. Role negotiation: there are prerequisites for this technique.

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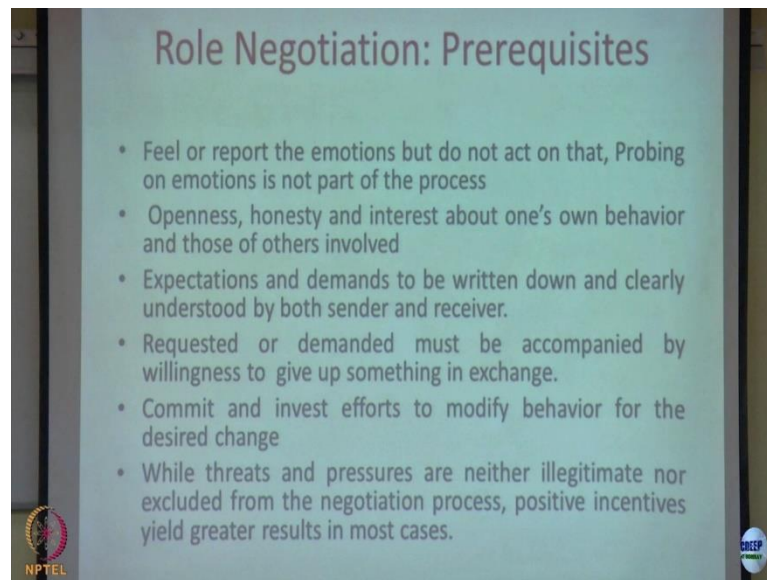
Feel or report the emotions but do not act on that, probing on emotion is not part of this process. So, when we are using role negotiation as an OD intervention in a team, we need not work on emotions of the people. We may acknowledge those, but we have to keep them aside for further discussion.

Openness honesty and interest, these are essential for this intervention to be successful. All those who are involved in this intervention have to have these three characteristics.

Expectations and demands to be written down and clearly understood by both sender and receiver. As the name suggest, there is a component of negotiation in this intervention. For any negotiation to fructify, to be followed, all the terms and conditions must be written down and must be understood in the similar way by both the parties.

Requested or demanded must be accompanied by a willingness to give up something in exchange. As it happens in negotiation both parties will request or demand something from each other.

We need to be willing to give or compromise on something to get something in this situation. Commit and invest efforts to modify behavior for the desired change. We may agree to change some behavior, we may agree to do something which we were not doing or stop doing something which we were doing. But that ultimately rests on my commitment and effort actually demonstrate that in the behavior.

So I may agree to it, but that agreement must be translated into action and for any cognition to get transferred into action requires additional energy and for that investment we should be willing. While threats and pressures are neither illegitimate nor excluded from the negotiation process, in the negotiation many times pressure and threats are used. However, positive intentions and positive incentives yield greater results in most cases.

If in the role negotiation process parties and the people involved think about win-win solutions, the possibility of the final solution to be sustainable happens to be very high in comparison to those situations where primarily threats or pressures are being used. And instead of win-win orientation, the negotiation is carried out with a win-lose or lose-lose kind of position.

Now look at the steps. In OD intervention we must understand that a lot of process work is involved, we have already discussed what is process work. Process work means that my behavior is the outcome of a process, i.e. there are certain under underlying values, beliefs, morals, emotions and assumptions and the dynamic of all these factors result in my behavior.

So, if I have to change my behavior, I need to work on certain emotions, assumptions, morals, values etcetera. So, even words and sentences play a critical role, the choice of words and the sentences play a critical role in arriving at the common understanding and reaching the desired outcome. So, that is why we need to be very conscious of what are the steps involved

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So, the first step is about discussion within your group. Suppose there are two groups involved, we can discuss the influence in power you believe others to have. How will you believe yourself to have and others believe you to have, what is the influence and power and how is it manifested in your work relations with others?

If there are two groups involved in this negotiation, they can have a group discussion within the group to understand what are the influence and power we have, what are the influence and power other group has and what other group thinks that influence and power we have? So, essentially they are making three lists. If this process is going on in a team each member has to negotiate his or her role with everyone else, they need to think about these things, power and influence, in context to their role.

So if there is an executive team where members are responsible for different tasks and if there is a need for role negotiation. Similar questions people have to ask, team members have to ask, in the context of their rule.

Then each of you should now think and take some notes if necessary, about the way work is conducted between yourself and others in the group. This should be done individually and quietly with the following questions in mind. What things would you change if you could, what would you keep as same and who and what would have to change in order to improve things. Keep in mind and focus upon those things that might be changed to improve your own effectiveness.

So, individually I need to think what in this group should start happening or stop happening, what is the change you wish? Then what would you keep the same, what are the good things, what are the what are the practices we must follow in the group or in the team and then who and what would have to change in order to improve things.

My understanding about what some other specific group members should start or stop doing. So, each group member makes that list. Now use one of the issue diagnostic forms. Generally, issue diagnostic forms have these questions, if you were to do following things more or better it would help me to increase my own effectiveness.

So, in a way I am extending my contract to the other group member, by saying that if you were to do following things it will make me more effective in my role. If you were to do the following things less or were to stop doing things it would help me to increase my own effectiveness and following things which you have been doing help to increase my effectiveness and I hope you will continue to do that.

So, in a group situation first I look at what are my power and influence, second I look at what are the interactions, what is the group dynamics, what is the teamwork, what is the team functioning, how the team is functioning and what it should be, how it should change, that will make me more effective.

And after that, I identify the specific team member with this request, generally captured in the issue diagnosis form where I specifically mention you please start or stop doing these things which will make me effective and continue to do those things which will keep me effective.

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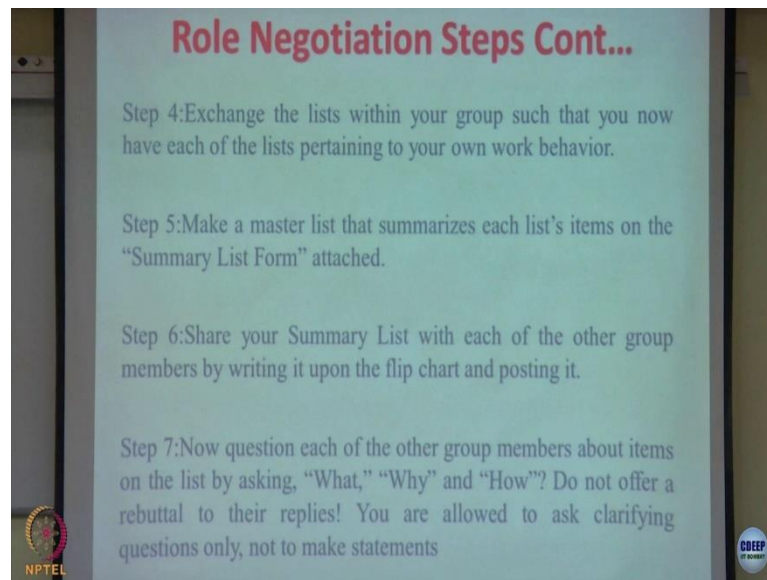
After this exchange the list within your group such that you now have each of the list pertaining to your own work behavior. So, if there are 6 group if there are 6 team members, all 6 team members will make these three lists, they exchange these lists with each other.

So, I get the perception and offer for the contract from all other team members and I extend my offer and contract and request to all other team members. Based on all the data which is coming from the different team members and what I have thought through, I make a summary list form, which includes what I am expected to do, what are the requests I have received from others and what are the requests others are making to me.

Share your summary list with each other in the group by writing it upon the flip chart and posting it. So, based on these requests and contact, everyone says I am willing to do these things and I am willing to continue these things. So, without any conflict the first round of agreement happens.

Most of the time team members want to be effective for their personal cause as well as for the cause of the team. They are not able to see their own behavior and in order to be better these kinds of requests and offers for the contract itself are sufficient to make them aware and realize what are the changes required.

Now, question each of the other group members about items on the list by asking why, what and how. If you do not agree with some contract or if you find some request to be

strange, you ask or probe further. Do not offer a rebuttal to their replies, you are allowed to ask clarification question only and not make a statement.

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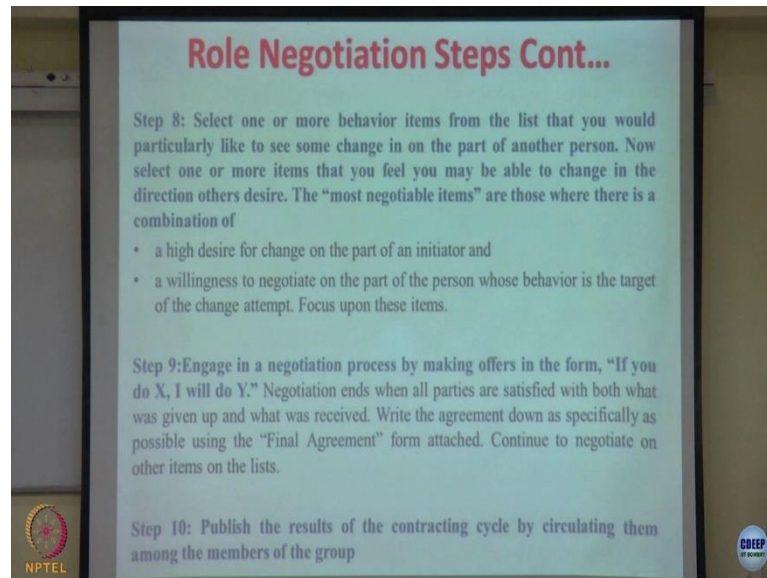
Then comes the step 8 where one or more behavior items are selected. So, after making the master list, having a probing not a discussion and after the probing and understanding more about the requests of the people, select one or more behavior items from the list that you would particularly like to see some change in on the part of another person.

Now, select one or more item that you feel you may be able to change in the direction others desire. The most negotiable items are those where there is a combination of high desire for change on the part of the initiator and willingness to negotiate on the part of the person whose behavior is the target of change attempts. So, focus upon these items.

Ninth step is to engage in the negotiation process by making offers in the form- if you do x, I will do y. So, you see most of these agreements about the change and most of these understanding about the required changes are being tackled before the negotiation actually starts. Just based on writing and giving and presenting the objective authentic data, lot of problems and challenges can be addressed.

If there is still a scope for negotiation in the step 9, different group members have to negotiate about what they expect more from the other person, if they are communicated any particular type of change to be introduced in their behavior.

Negotiation ends when all parties are satisfied with both what was given up and what was received, write the agreement down as specifically as possible using the final agreement and continue to negotiate on the other items on the list. Publish the result of the contracting cycle by circulating them among the members of the group.

We need to circulate these contracts with other group members. So, if there is a team of 6 and 2 group members reach to some negotiation that negotiation and that agreement must be circulated to all other team members as well. This is the process of role negotiation technique.

There are types of intervention related to the Task structure. Basically, when we look at the task structure what we are looking at? We are looking at how the team members are coordinating with each other and how their behavior is regulated. So, how much autonomy they have and how much coordination and what type of coordination is required?

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To understand the importance of coordination and identifying the role of that in team functioning, many times outdoor activities are very useful. In outdoor activities like the one presented in the slide are not exactly related to that job. But they have a lot of parallels with the job and they create a safe situation to self reflect on their behavior.

It means how do they exchange communication, how do they exchange information, how do they coordinate, who takes leadership role, who takes followers role, who takes

responsibility, who avoids responsibility, many such things come out in a very safe environment in the outdoor activities.

So, to understand the importance of coordination and my general disposition about coordination, outdoor activities are very useful. Group composition is the third aspect of team OD intervention, that is about complementarity of the knowledge skill and attitude. If that complementarity is not maintained, teams generally remain suboptimal performing teams, the competency means skill, knowledge and attitude.

So complementarity has to be there in all three aspects, like there has to be complementarity about the knowledge and skill, but there is a complementarity required in the attitude as well. That is where the personality test, learning style, predominant motivators, these kinds of factors become important.

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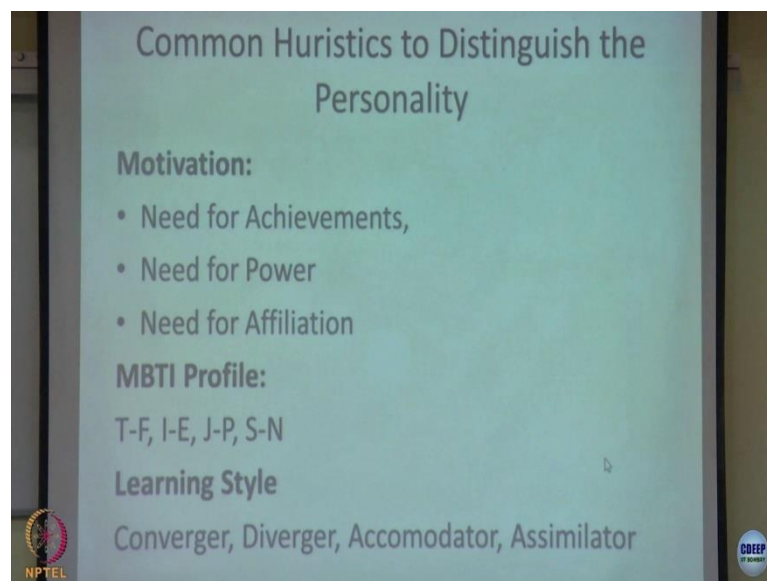
So, you might be familiar with some of these factors on which we distinguish personality and work behavior. For example, motivation may be arising out of the need for achievement, need for power and need for affiliation. Different people will have different levels of needs and that might be motivating them.

We need to understand in a team who is motivated by what and accordingly if we can assign the roles and if we can accommodate their motivation, that helps a lot in achieving the coordination.

Then, many of you must be aware of the MBTI profile. There is thinking and feeling continuum, there is introversion and extroversion orientation, there is judgment and perceiving orientation and sensing and intuitive way of looking at things. Different people have different type of MBTI profile. To coordinate better; it is very helpful for the team members to understand each other's profile.

Similarly, there are different ways people learn. If you remember the Kolb's learning cycle, it involves how do we collect information and how do we use that information. We collect information through concrete experience and abstract conceptualization and we transform information through active experimentation and reflection in observation. As the combination of how people collect information and how people transform the information learning styles emerge. So, there are different types of learning styles which are called converger, diverger, accommodator and assimilator as per the Kolb's learning style form.

Now, we need to know that different people within the same team may have different type of learning style. So, while knowing about the different types of motivation or psychological profile or learning style we achieve two things, number one we start appreciating the individual differences in spite of all the technical complementarity available and ensuring that in a team, there might be differences because of these temperaments.

So, when we know about the differences when we know about each other temperaments and these dispositions, we become appreciative of each other. And at the same time when I become aware of my temperament, I try to accommodate others and I try to change my disposition to some extent.

There are certain things which cannot be changed drastically. But there is a possibility of making some modifications in these dispositions. If that modification is not possible beyond a limit, at least a synergistic approach can be adopted, where if I know that I am not very good at planning, I can delegate that to other team member and trust that team member for his or her planning capabilities. So, by generating more appreciation and creating the synergy based on this knowledge the coordination of the teams can be improved. So, this is also one of the types of OD interventions.

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Then we come to the type 2 OD interventions, which are related to the team performance. In the team performance, two prominent components are Team functioning and Performance norms. Team functioning means the specific task whether team is able to perform or not. When teams are not able to perform the specific task they are assigned, there might be a problem about the ability to manage projects. making decisions, solving problems or even design thinking if team has a task of innovation.

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We know that there are 6 steps of problem solving and interventions can be around linear process of problem solving. Interventions can also be done on group decision making processes. How to effectively use the standard agenda, brainstorming, nominal group technique, consensus voting and ranking as methods of making decisions? These are particularly useful when team is not effective in decision making.

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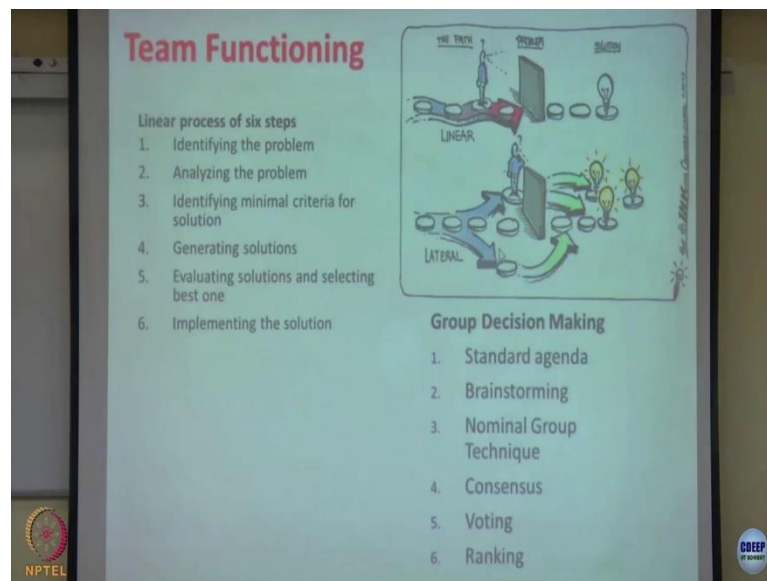
Then there are interventions about Lateral thinking. Lateral thinking is thinking beyond obvious, lateral thinking is thinking beyond the linear and sequential way of thinking.

Lateral thinking and 6 hats proposed by de Bono are important OD interventions to make the teams practice more creative thinking and lateral thinking and come to the innovative solution. Project management is also a very important team competency, project management is a developed science in itself. Generally, project management training is given in combination with the classroom training and practical assignment.

You might remember the 6-sigma training. 6 sigma training cannot happen just in the classroom. In the classroom you understand the concept, you have to come back to the workplace and do that project, whether it is a green belt project or black belt project and you are encouraged to use all the statistical techniques and other techniques and decision making techniques which are taught as a 6 sigma training to be used in that project.

Similarly, a project management training also involves embedded learning which is the combination of classroom training, coaching, and action learning projects as well.

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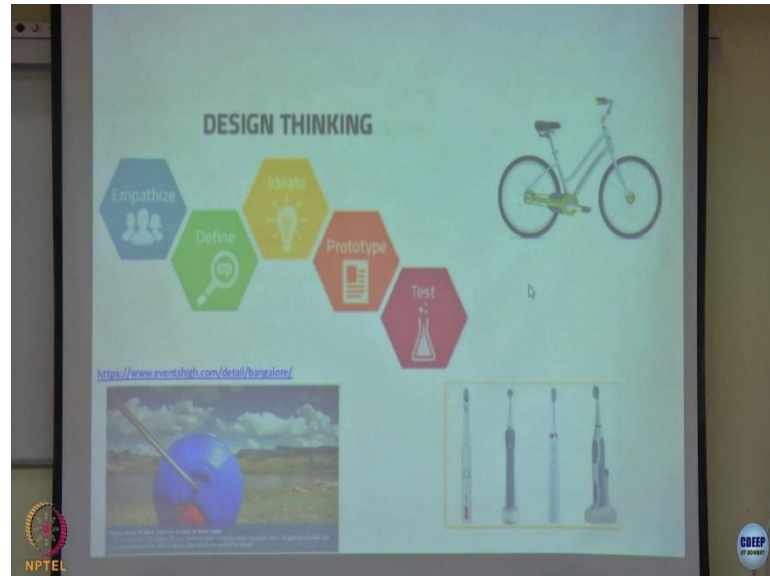
Nowadays design thinking is identified as a very important competency. There is a huge pressure on organizations to be more innovative and it is increasingly realized and recognized that innovation is not the job of a specialized department responsible for R&D and innovation. In a business organization, innovation is essential and innovative thinking is essential for all the levels of employees. For that we have a process called design thinking. It was more popular amongst the designers earlier, but in the field of management also design thinking is emerging as very important and well recognized OD intervention.

Design thinking is different from a typical innovative project, because it starts not from the problem, but empathizing and closely observing the end customer. So, empathy and prototyping are used in a very specific way in design thinking. We have a few examples of design thinking like Shimano's innovation of the coasting bike or electric toothbrush or transferable water container used in Africa; these are some of the examples of design thinking output.

So design thinking has also become a very important team intervention for enhancing the team functioning. Last but not the least in the team performance interventions are performance norms.
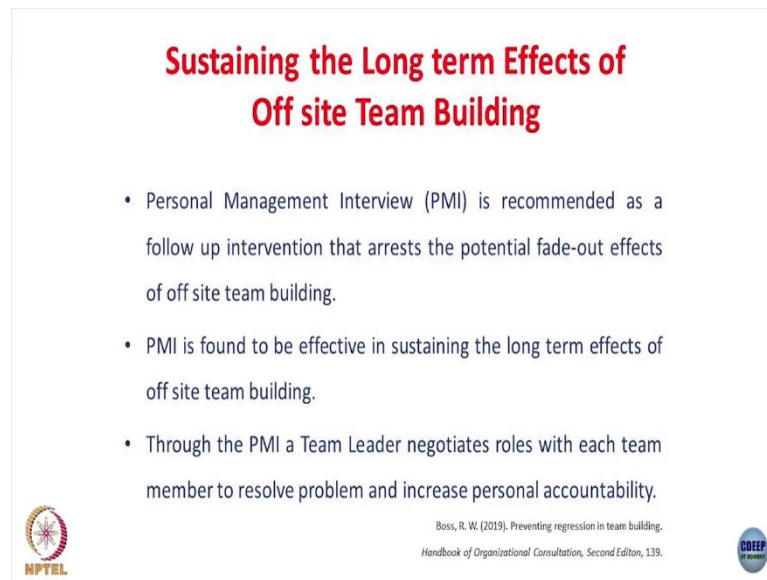
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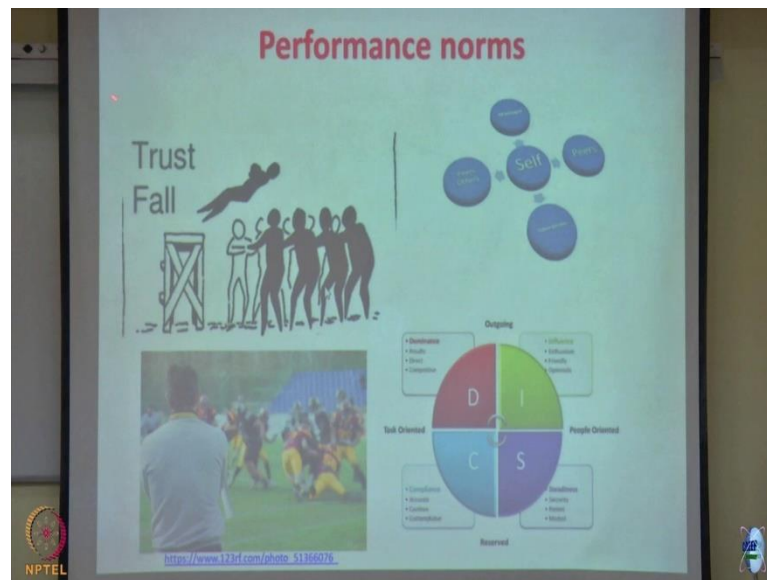
Performance norms are about how people approach their work and interact with each other in a team. The norms may be related to trust, norms may be related to how people interact with each other. To understand what are the norms prevailing norms of a team, observation is a very good method. When a trained consultant just observes the team functioning, it brings out, it clarifies the performance norms of the team.

Then there is a very famous activity called Trust Fall used in a team situation, where focus is on making people ready to trust on the team members and respecting other's trust by the team members. 360-degree appraisal is also a very important method of developing the performance norms.

Disk profiling which looks at the dominance, influence, compliance and steadiness, the task orientation, people orientation outgoing and deserved these kinds of dispositions. So, disk profiling is again a prominent method of OD intervention to develop better performance norms in a team.

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Many times questions are raised: How the interventions which generally gave immediate boost up of energy and insights, how the impact of those interventions can be sustained? So, personal management interview is recommended as the follow up intervention that arrest the potential fade out effects of offsite team building. There is extensive research done by boss and his colleagues, they suggest that personal management interview is effective and sustaining the long-term effects of offsite team building.

Generally, through the PMI a team leader negotiates the roles with each team member to resolve problems and increase the personal accountability. After the intervention, based on the agreements about the change in behavior, a personal management interview protocol is set up and using that protocol leaders take regular meetings to make people remind and take the report on how they are able to follow the change behaviors or are they following the new norms. So, this is found to be effective way to sustain the impact of these team interventions.

Then there is the type three problem where team is not able to look at its impact and its association with the larger organization. If that is the case, focus of the intervention happens to be organizational objectives and systems perspective. What do we do, we make this team involved in the strategic planning or we make this team aware of the strategic plan of the organization.
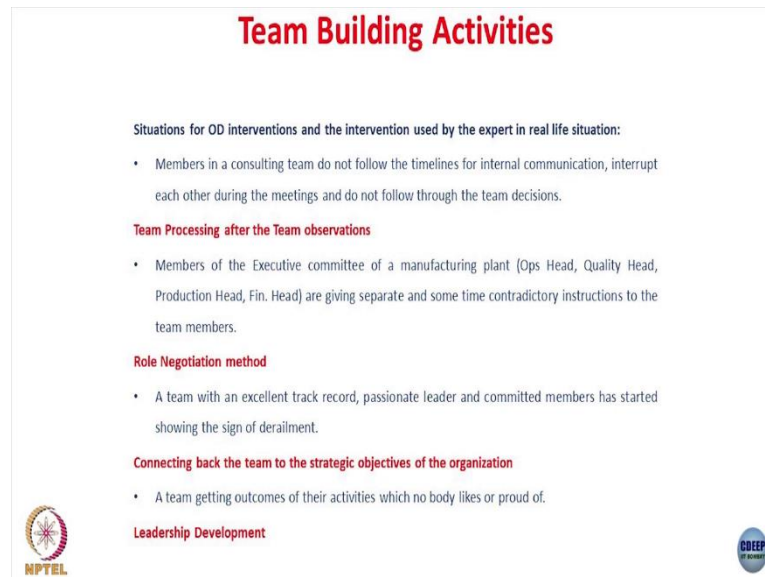
We ask the team to do the stakeholder mapping and to check what are the expectations of the different stakeholders and to trace how the expectations of the different stakeholders have changed over the years or recently. These are the ways to make teams connect back to the organizational agenda.

If there are any intergroup collaboration required, that also helps in bringing back team to the mainstream of the organization. The teams might be drifted because of their intergroup or inter team conflicts with other teams. In that situation we need to have intergroup collaboration, an intergroup role negotiation similar to the role negotiation technique which we discussed.

In the role negotiation between the two groups, the 3 lists means what is my expectation about my power and influence or the group's power and influence, what is the power and influence of other group and what other group might be thinking about power and influence we have and similarly what are the changes required by other group.

And what are the changes I can do, all these discussions are being carried out in the inter group or inter team interventions. So, this is the discussion about the team interventions about type 1, type 2 and type 3 problems.

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Team Building Activities

Situations for OD interventions and the intervention used by the expert in real life situation:

- Members in a consulting team do not follow the timelines for internal communication, interrupt each other during the meetings and do not follow through the team decisions.

Team Processing after the Team observations

- Members of the Executive committee of a manufacturing plant (Ops Head, Quality Head, Production Head, Fin. Head) are giving separate and some time contradictory instructions to the team members.

Role Negotiation method

- A team with an excellent track record, passionate leader and committed members has started showing the sign of derailment.

Connecting back the team to the strategic objectives of the organization

- A team getting outcomes of their activities which no body likes or proud of.

Leadership Development

Now if we look at the team building activities and the problems with which we started this session and now we can look at what are the appropriate interventions required in the situations. Members in a consulting, do not follow the timelines for the communication, interrupt each other during the meeting and do not follow through the team decisions. What is the appropriate intervention here first?

For the performance norms what is the most common intervention? Observation, the first step is observation because observation gives us hard data a clear data how people are behaving and that is the starting point for the intervention and connecting that behavior with the outcome.

Members of executive committee of the manufacturing plant giving separate sometimes contradictory instructions, having the ego tussle, what is the appropriate intervention? role negotiation.

Role negotiation because people are having egos and want to exercise the authority. All the heads are at the equal level of the hierarchy. So, no one is going to accept other's authority and that is the cause of they giving separate instructions, in that situation there

has to be a proper boundary management and the role clarity and that requires a role negotiation.

Team with excellent track record, passionate leader, committed members has started to show the sign of derailment is which problem type 1 type 2 or type 3 problem.

Generally type 3 problem, team is not able to see what is expected from them in the change time. Team getting outcome of their activities which nobody likes or is proud of is generally the case of leadership, team might be aware that what we are doing is not wonderful, team might not be happy about their outcome. But still they are not able to chart out the new path, because that requires leadership. Without leadership team efforts cannot be directed to one specific direction.

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Now is the time for the Virtual Teams, you might have worked or you will be working in the teams which are widely dispersed; may be in different parts of the world and mostly interacting using IT.

Whether these OD interventions are relevant for the virtual teams that is a natural question. What is found in the research and these research studies are again quoted in your textbook of Worley and Cummings. They say that communication technologies are augmented to include the goal setting process, team functioning and team performance available to.

Dialogue intervention intended to improve the shared mental models were also found to be effective in face-to-face teams as well as the video conference teams. The video conference team when have a dialogue to build the shared mental model, the video conferencing was also found to be equally effective. Virtual and geographically dispersed teams can also take advantage of a variety of asynchronous facilitation tools, such as wikis, shared portals or the groupwares. And because of these asynchronous facilitation tools virtual teams can be effective.

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Interpersonal closeness between members of a virtual team is created, when one member proactively helps another member to solve a problem or address a concern. This is a research finding. Another research finding suggests that closeness is maintained by frequent, short, but content-oriented messages not the process-oriented messages. When task-specific, content-oriented messages are exchanged more frequently, that helps the virtual team to be more effective.

Team performance is enhanced by initial face-to-face team building meetings. When before going for the virtual setting when there is a face-to-face meeting, it is found that this process, this practice makes the virtual team also more effective.

So, these are the ways to enhance the functioning of the virtual teams. Many of the findings, many of the scientific principles which are relevant in face-to-face teams, which are working at the same location, apply to the virtual teams as well.