



# STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TEAM DYNAMICS

ADR Monthly Series for Educators, April 2025

## KNOW YOUR TEAM

We all know Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. Understanding these phases can help support group dynamics in IEP teams. Knowing individual team member strengths and discomforts can support setting up all members for success.

## TACKLE PROBLEMS QUICKLY

Act quickly to address behavior that is distracting from the meeting's purpose. Refer to meeting norms or have a private side conversation to work through challenges. Dismissing behavior/problems in hopes that they will go away sends a message that behavior is tolerated.

## DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Teams that lack focus or direction can develop poor dynamics. Always define the purpose, objective, and roles at the start of a meeting to create a clear understanding by all team members.

## BREAK DOWN BARRIERS

Getting to know each other on a team is an essential way to break down barriers. As people develop relationships, they feel more comfortable and safe being present, honesty, and authentic. Discomfort can lead to defensive behavior.

## FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION

Clear and open communication is central to good team dynamics. All forms of communication are critical to avoid ambiguity- in person, phone, email, shared documents, etc. Proactive communication keeps all team members informed. Watch out for domination communicators at meetings, have a plan to ensure balanced voice.

## PAY ATTENTION

Watch for shifts in group dynamic from positive to poor. Pay attention to dominators, group think, passive participation, and changes in body language. Have a plan to address changing group dynamics- refer to norms, take a break, capture agreements/progress, etc.

## RESOURCES FOR IEP TEAMS

[IEP Team Member Roles/ Responsibilities](#)

[IEP Agenda Talking Points](#)

[IEP Meeting Norms](#)  
set the communication structure

[The Art of Gathering - setting the purpose of the meeting](#)

[Addressing Team Miscommunication](#)

[IEP Team Member Sample Role Script](#)

Agenda: [Elem/Middle Link](#) and [HS Link](#)

[Link to all ADR Monthly Tips for 24-25](#)