

The Team Barometer©

The Team Barometer is an assessment which is designed to give insight into individual and group behaviour to support team building, conflict resolution and improved working relations. It helps any group of people working together to learn more about themselves, how they behave in groups and how that behaviour influences and is also influenced by the group. It is a psychological map. The tool combines the Organization Barometer with Wilfred Bion's theory of groups and group process.

Wilfred Bion observed that groups tended to demonstrate two distinct forms of behaviour; task-driven or **workgroup behaviours** where the group collaborates constructively to achieve team goals and relationship-driven or '**as if**' behaviours where the group is concerned with emotional needs or what Bion termed 'basic assumptions'. Bion describes basic assumptions as the tacit underlying assumptions on which the 'as if' behaviour of the group is based. Bion specifically identified three basic assumptions or 'as if' behaviours: dependency, fight-flight and pairing. When a group adopts any one of these 'as if' behaviours, it interferes with the task the group is attempting to accomplish.

In **dependency**, the essential aim of the group is to attain security through and have its members protected by one individual. The group members behave passively, and act as though the leader, by contrast, is in complete control. For example, the leader may pose a question only to be greeted with docile silence, as though he or she had not spoken at all. The leader may be idealized into a loving parent who can take care of his or her children. Resentment at being dependent may eventually lead the group members to 'overthrow' the leader and search for a new one.

In the basic assumption of **fight-flight**, the group behaves as though it has met to preserve itself at all costs, and that this can only be done by running away from someone or fighting someone or something. In fight, the group may be characterized by aggressiveness and hostility; in flight, the group may chit-chat, tell stories, arrive late and avoid addressing the task at hand. The leader for this sort of group is one who can mobilize the group for attack, or lead it in flight.

The final basic assumption group, **pairing**, is based on the assumption that the group has met for the purpose of reproduction. Two people, regardless of the gender of either, carry out the work of the group through their continued interaction. The remaining group members listen eagerly and attentively with a sense of relief and hopeful anticipation but do very little themselves.

Research indicates there is a direct correlation between the dependency, fight-flight and pairing or 'as if' behaviours described by Wilfred Bion and groups that are experiencing high levels of denial, self-censorship, conflict and confusion as captured by the Organizational Barometer©. In contrast, high levels of contentment and renewal are correlated with increased workgroup behaviours.

The Team Barometer© consists of 56 items; where the first 40 items are taken from the existing Organizational Barometer and a further 16 items measure the tendency for the group to demonstrate 'as if' behaviours. The Team Barometer can be used with a range of working groups; from intact teams to project groups or teams and even an entire business unit. Several different groups within the same entity may complete this assessment simultaneously. The Team Barometer© may only be administered by a certified facilitator who has gone through a rigorous training program and is committed to applying the tool in an ethical way. For more information on the Four Rooms of Change® and the Team Barometer© please go to www.fourroomsofchange.com.au.