

Heritage University  
Jacob Campbell, Ph.D. LICSW

Spring 2026 SOWK 487  
Theories of Practice II

Understanding  
**Social Work  
Groups**



If you were to describe your day today as an animal, what animal would you be today and why?

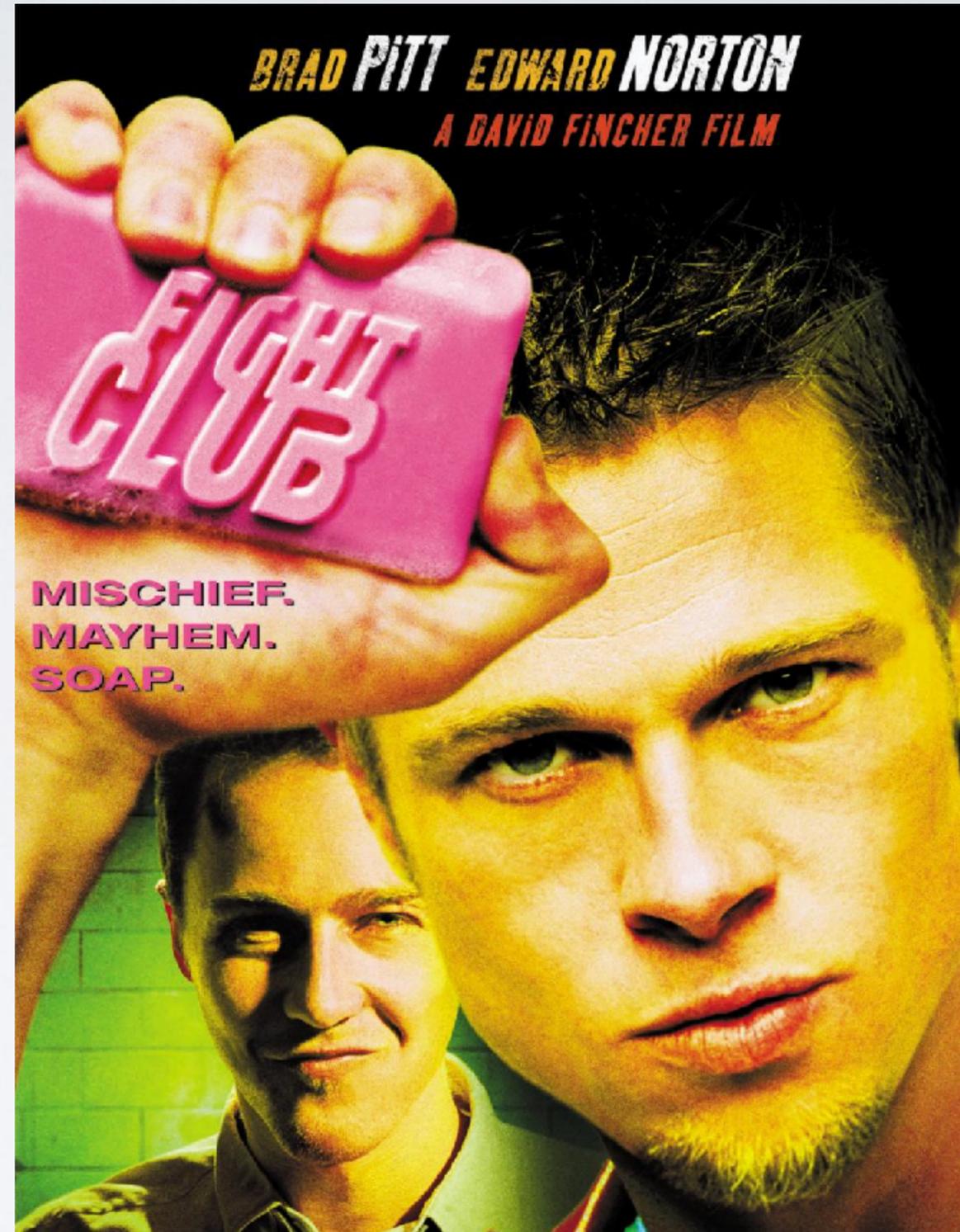
# AGENDA

- Family Treatment Modality Research Presentations
- Overview of working with groups
- Practice with a development group
- Group dynamics and roles
- Working in a circle activity

# FAMILY TREATMENT MODALITY RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

# SOCIAL WORK & GROUPS

What are groups used for in  
social work practice?



# WORKING WITH GROUPS

## **Groups?**

A group is a collection of people with shared interests who come together to pursue a goal.

“Nothing truly valuable can be achieved except by the unselfish cooperation of many individuals.”

–Albert Einstein

## Benefits of Groups

Mutual assistance  
Connecting with others  
Testing new behaviors  
Goal achievement  
Decision making

# TYPES OF GROUPS

Treatment Groups

Support groups  
Educational groups  
Growth groups  
Therapy groups  
Socialization groups

# TYPES OF GROUPS

## Treatment Groups

Support groups  
Educational groups  
Growth groups  
Therapy groups  
Socialization groups

## Self-Help Groups

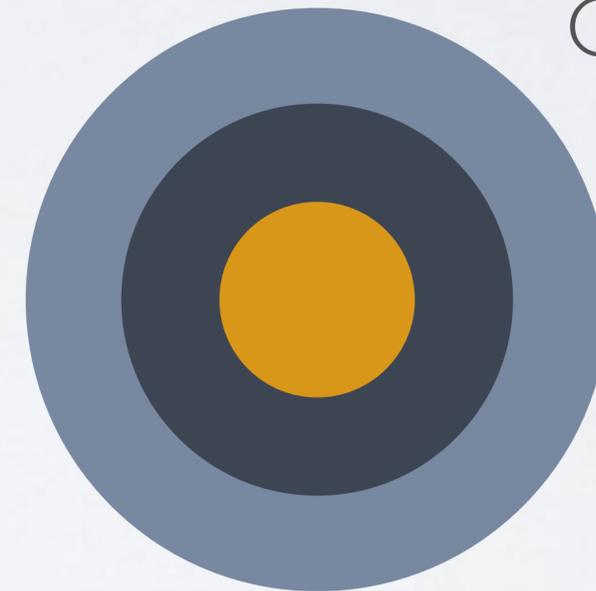
12 Step Groups  
Support Groups  
Online Self-Help Groups

# TYPES OF GROUPS

## Treatment Groups

Support groups  
Educational groups  
Growth groups  
Therapy groups  
Socialization groups

## Task Groups



Community

Organization

Client

# TYPES OF GROUPS

## Treatment Groups

Support groups  
Educational groups  
Growth groups  
Therapy groups  
Socialization groups

## Task Groups

Board of Directors  
Task Forces  
Committees  
Commissions  
Legislative Bodies  
Staff Meetings  
Case Conferences  
Social Action

# GROUP DEMO

## Jacob's Group Format

- Review the rules
- Check in question
- Fun engaging activity
- Work on a specific topic or skill



# CHARACTERISTICS OF Treatment, Self-Help, and Task Groups

Group Characteristic	Treatment Group	Self-Help Group	Task Group
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- Reason for group formation
- Facilitator
- Group member roles
- Communication patterns
- Procedures
- Group member composition
- Self-disclosure
- Confidentiality
- Evaluation of Success

# CHARACTERISTICS OF Treatment, Self-Help, and Task Groups

Group Characteristic	Treatment Group	Self-Help Group	Task Group
Reason for group formation	Members' personal needs	Members' personal needs	Task to be completed
Facilitator	Mental health professional leads the group	Member led; there maybe be no appointed facilitator; a trained peer or group member may facilitate	Led by agency employee

# CHARACTERISTICS OF Treatment, Self-Help, and Task Groups

Group Characteristic	Treatment Group	Self-Help Group	Task Group
Group member roles	Develop organically through interaction	Develop organically through interaction	May be assigned, appointed, or develop organically through interaction
Communication patterns	Open, conversational interaction based on members' needs	Open, conversational interaction based on members' needs	Focused on the specific task to be accomplished.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF Treatment, Self-Help, and Task Groups

Group Characteristic	Treatment Group	Self-Help Group	Task Group
Procedures	Flexible or formal, depending on the group	Flexible or formal, depending on the group	Set agenda. May be structured by by-laws or Roberts' Rules of Order
Group member composition	Based on members common concerns or presenting problems	Based on members common concerns or presenting problems	Based on positions, needed talents, knowledge, or expertise

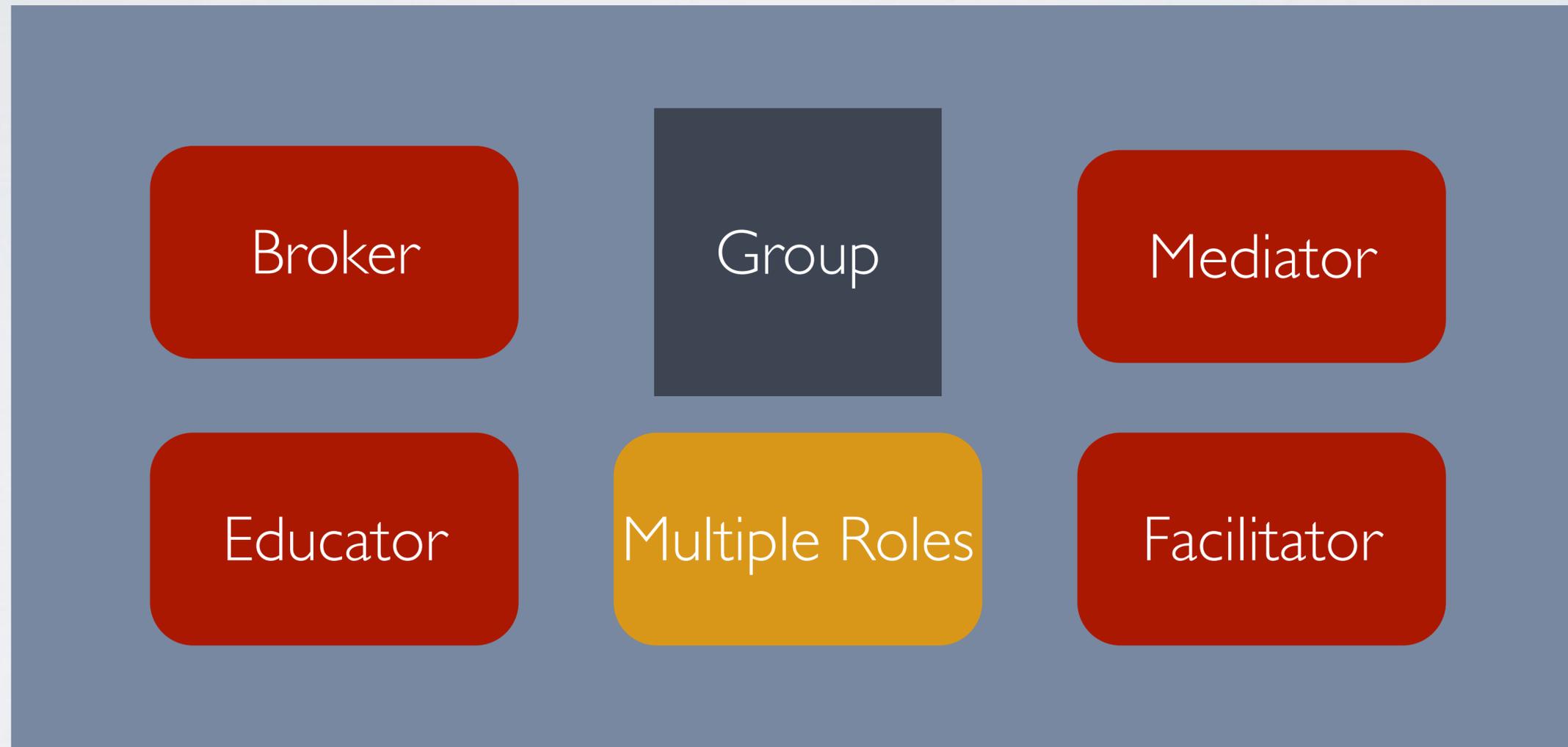
# CHARACTERISTICS OF Treatment, Self-Help, and Task Groups

Group Characteristic	Treatment Group	Self-Help Group	Task Group
Self-disclosure	Expected to be high	Expected to be high	Expected to be low
Confidentiality	Group content is generally private and kept within the group	Group content is generally private and kept within the group	Group proceedings may be private but can be open to the public

# CHARACTERISTICS OF Treatment, Self-Help, and Task Groups

Group Characteristic	Treatment Group	Self-Help Group	Task Group
Evaluation of success	Based on members' meeting treatment goals	Determined by group members; survival of the group indicates success as member attendance is what keeps the group	Based on accomplishment of task or mandate, or producing a product

# PROFESSIONAL ROLES IN GROUPS



# GROUP FUNCTIONS & ROLES

## Potentially Positive Roles

Information seeker  
Opinion seeker  
Elaborator  
Instructor  
Evaluator  
Energizer  
Recorder



Procedural technician  
Harmonizer  
Compromiser  
Encourager

Follower  
Tension reliever  
Listener

# NEGATIVE AND NONFUNCTIONAL ROLES

## Potentially Negative Roles

Aggressor  
Blocker  
Recognition seeker  
Dominator  
Help seeker  
Confessor

## Nonfunctional Roles

Scapegoat  
Defensive member  
Deviant member  
Quite member  
Internal leader

# GROUP BEHAVIOR

## Constructive Group Behavior



## Problematic Group Behavior

Members openly communicate personal feelings and attitudes and anticipate that other members will be helpful.

Members listen carefully to one another and give all ideas a fair hearing.

Decisions are reached through group consensus after considering everyone's views and feelings.

Members make efforts to incorporate the views of dissenters or less powerful members rather than to dominate or override these views.

Members continue to keep discussions on a superficial level or avoid revealing their feelings and opinions.

Members are critical and evaluative of each other. They rarely acknowledge or listen to contributions from others.

Dominant members dismiss or bully other members in decision-making

Members make decisions prematurely without identifying or weighing possible alternatives.

# GROUP BEHAVIOR

## Constructive Group Behavior



## Problematic Group Behavior

Members recognize and give feedback regarding others' strengths and growth.

Members are critical of others' differences.

Members use "I" messages to speak for themselves, owning their own feelings and positions on matters.

Members do not personalize their messages but use indirect forms of communication to express their feelings and positions.

The guidelines established in initial sessions become norms.

Members act in distracting or disruptive ways.

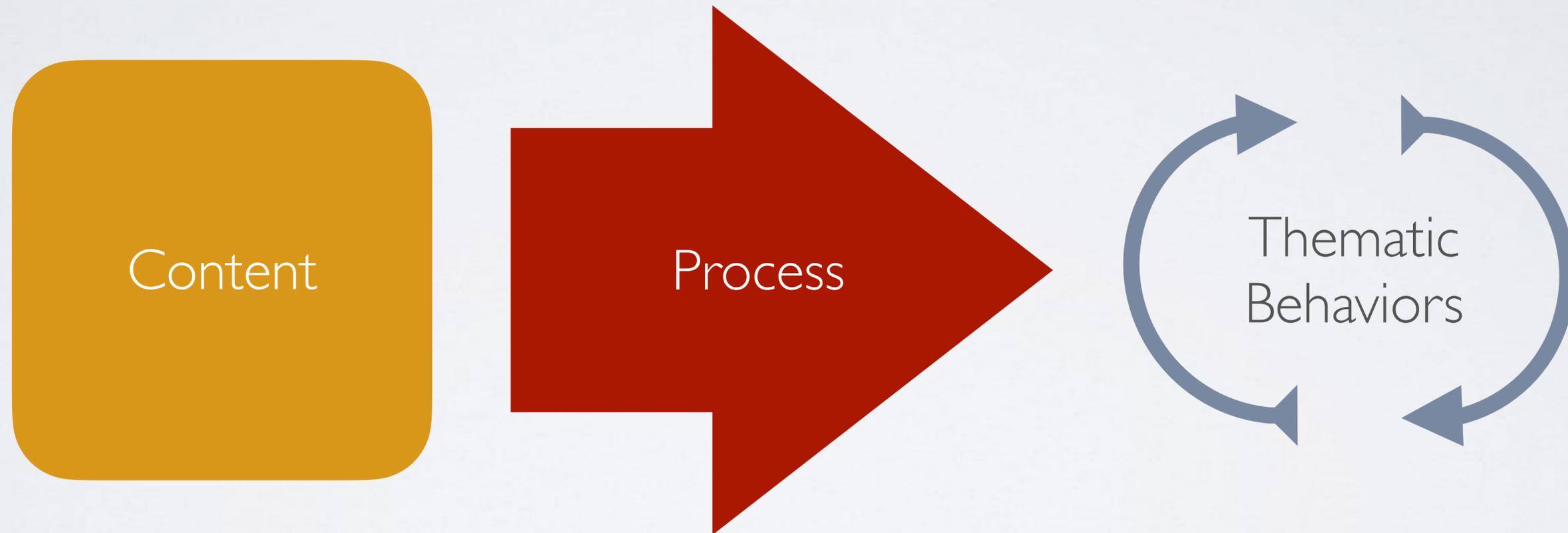
The group works out problems that impair group functioning.

Members avoid talking about the here and now or addressing personal or group problems.

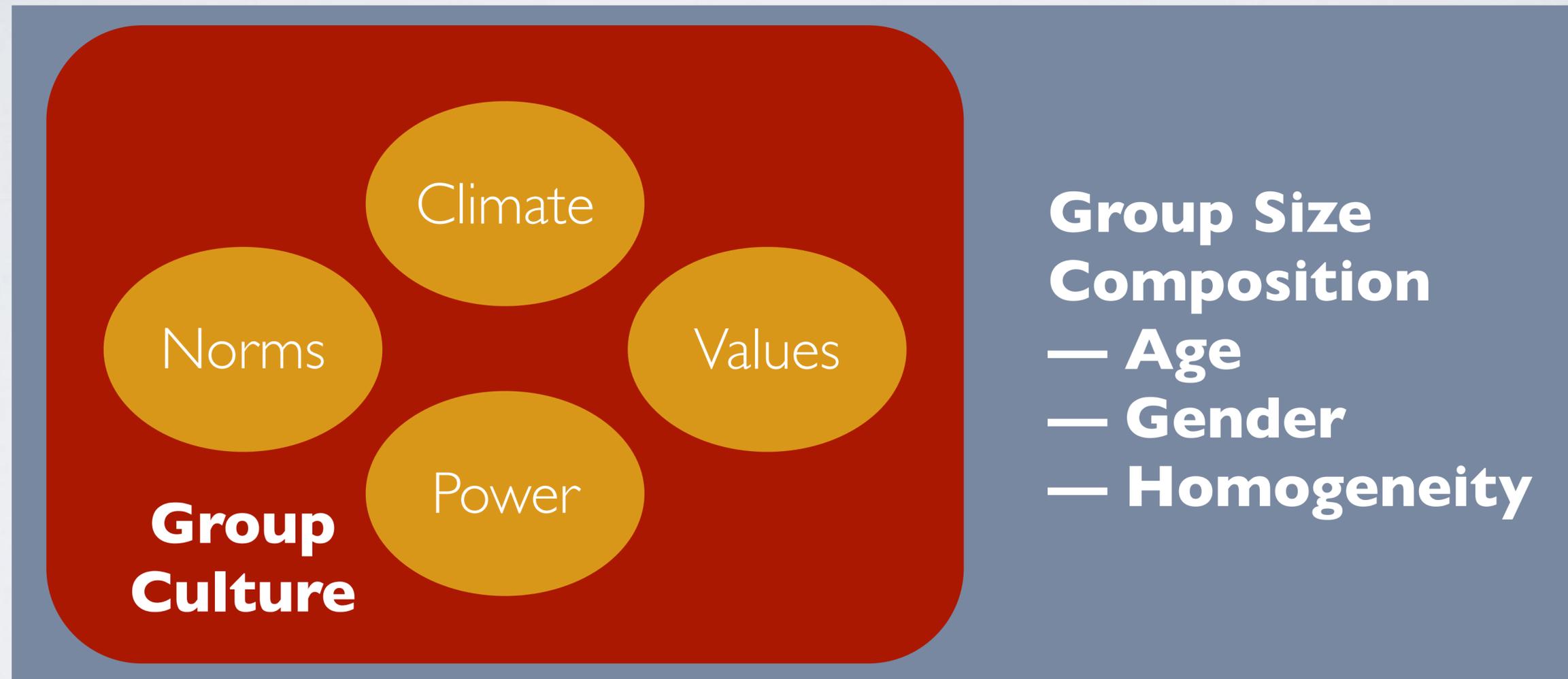
Members are attuned to the needs and feelings of others and give emotional support.

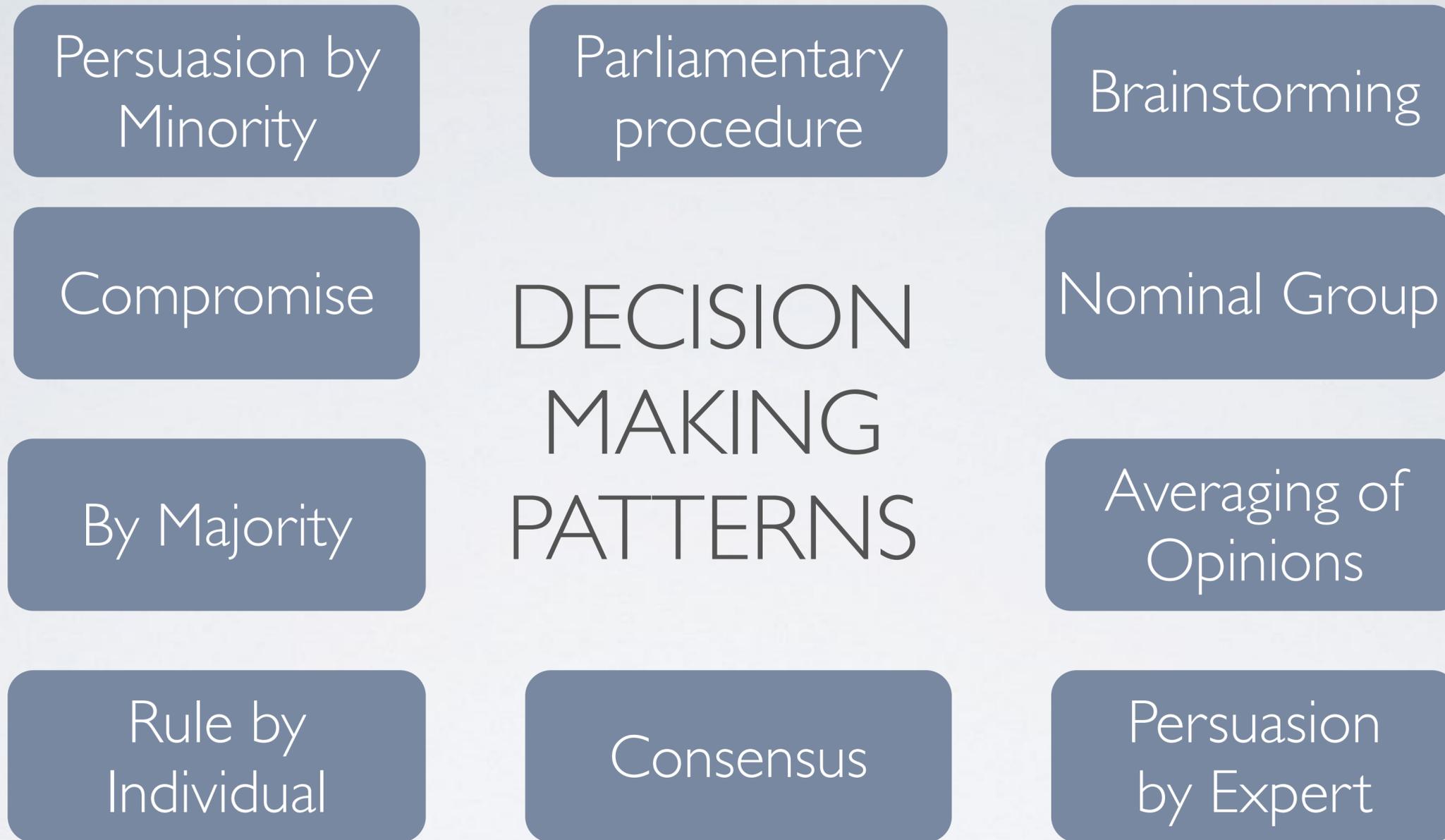
Members show little awareness of the needs and feelings of others; emotional investment in others is limited.

# ASSESSING INDIVIDUALS' PATTERNED BEHAVIORS

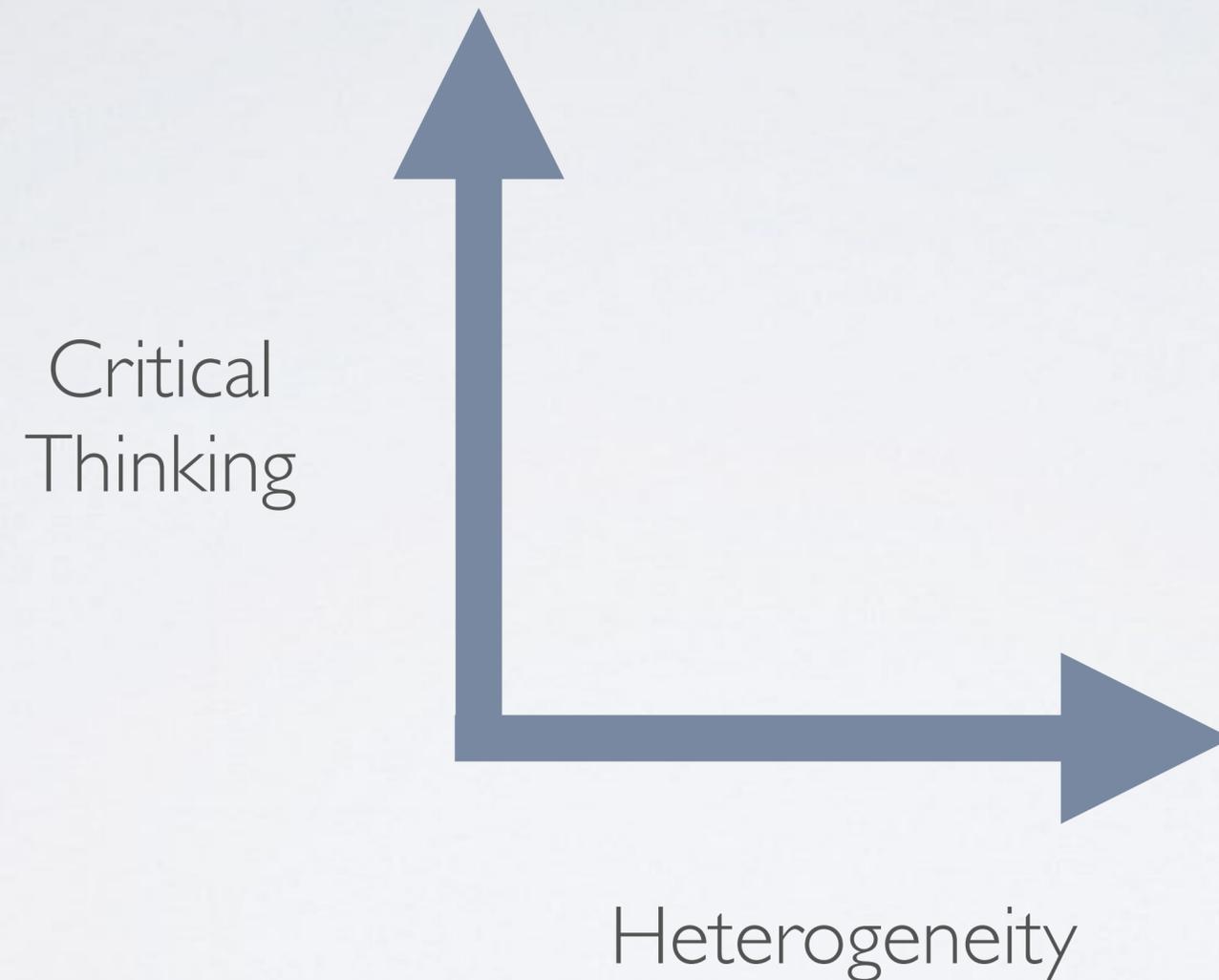


# GROUP DYNAMICS AND COMPOSITION





# CRITICAL THINKING AND GROUPS



# PLEASE TAKE MIDTERM FEEDBACK

