

## Group Roles

Often members take on certain roles (sometimes consciously and sometimes without really knowing they are doing it) People will take on different roles at different stages of your group. These are some supportive and destructive group roles you might want to be aware of.

### Supportive roles

1. Information seeker-asks other members to tell more of their story.
2. Opinion seeker-takes an active interest in what others in the group think.
3. Initiator-offers new ideas, new ways of doing things. Often sets the pace in a discussion.
4. Elaborator-wants more than just the facts in a story. Adds "color" to the discussion.
5. Tension-reliever-often uses gentle humor to relieve tense situations. Uses "identification" to keep the tense person from feeling alone: "I understand. I feel that way many times myself."
6. Reviewer-tends to provide summary statements and clarity statements.
7. Consensus seeker-looks to see what the group is thinking & whether or not there is agreement on issues or decisions
8. Encourager-finds ways to build up others in the group.
9. Standard-bearer-holds forth the values of the group and defends them.

### Destructive roles

1. Distractor-consistently focuses on stories or issues irrelevant to the topic, but very exciting to them
2. Aggressor- insults & criticizes others. may show strong jealousy
3. Recognition seeker- tends to focus primarily on their own achievements & success
4. Dominator-monopolizes group interaction. Tries to control discussions.
5. Special-interest advocate-tends to focus on personal pet peeve regardless of the topic or direction of discussion.
6. Negativist-might be a perfectionist who is never satisfied with anything. Quick to point out the "down side" of any issue or topic.
7. Quibbler-focuses on details. Often loses the forest for the sake of the trees.
8. Practical joker-rather than using humor positively, tends to distract people with jokes and comments. This is often a defense mechanism and is used whenever a discussion gets too personal.

Your job as a leader is not to "peg" each person in order to figure out what their role is. Roles may change from time to time. You simply need to be aware that these kinds of roles exist in a group. Listen to each person with a sensitive spirit and heart. Ask probing questions that help get behind each role. If you have problems working with anyone particular type of person in your group, consult your coach or ministry leaders for ways to solve the problem and deal with the relationship.