Common Group Problems and Tips to Help

1. **Tasks not being completed by the deadline**
   - Discuss and establish timelines that ALL members can agree on
   - Ask each member to present a progress report each meeting on what they have completed since the last meeting
   - Offer to assist one another to complete tasks if necessary

2. **Difficulty in getting started**
   - Take time for all members to introduce themselves, including name, background, specific strengths
   - Develop a shared understanding of the task by brainstorming
   - Ensure each member has an opportunity to speak and make suggestions
   - Develop an agenda and a timeline
   - Nominate someone to act as the manager or leader, either for that team meeting or for the term of the project
   - Exchange names and contact details, including email addresses and phone numbers
   - Decide on jobs or sub-tasks for each member

3. **Ideas not thoroughly discussed as a group**
   - Engage in more brainstorming, particularly focusing on the ‘What if …?’ and ‘What else ..?’ type questions
   - Ask each member individually for ideas
   - If few ideas are generated, organize to complete some further research individually and then meet up as a team at a later date

4. **Members not contributing**
   - Establish why a member is quiet or not participating.
   - Communicate that all opinions will be valued.
   - Ensure that each member gets their turn to contribute, this may mean ‘going around the circle’.

5. **Ineffective communication**
   - Identify specific issues which seem to affect communication
   - Consider how to address such issues. For example, if team members seem to be misunderstanding each other, it may be helpful to clarify what is being said

6. **Conflict between group members**
   - Respect the ideas of other group members
   - Show that you have heard other member’s ideas and when disagreeing do so politely and respectfully
   - Understand that working in a team requires some negotiation and compromise
   - Take a break to diffuse the situation and recollect thoughts at a later meeting

7. **Domineering personalities**
   - Create time limits on individual contributions or have a ‘talking stick’
   - Ensure that each member has a chance to speak, without interruption
   - Remind all members that it is important to hear all opinions in relation to the topic and respect those opinions

8. **Inability to focus on a task**
   - Set particular tasks to be completed in each session
o Meet first and then go for lunch after you have completed some work to give yourselves a reward for staying on task
o Ensure that individuals prepare for meetings and talk through what they have completed since the last meeting