# Understanding And Addressing The Irrational And Unconscious In Groups: A Comprehensive Guide

Groups are a fundamental part of human society. We interact with them in all aspects of our lives, from our families and friends to our workplaces and communities. While groups can be a source of support and belonging, they can also be the site of conflict, misunderstanding, and even violence.

One of the challenges of working with groups is that they are often irrational and unconscious. This means that the behavior of groups can be difficult to predict and control, and that even the most well-intentioned efforts to improve group dynamics can backfire.

**Shadow Working in Project Management: Understanding and Addressing the Irrational and Unconscious in Groups (Complexity and Interdisciplinarity in Project Management)** by Bernice Langley

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In this article, we will explore the irrational and unconscious aspects of group behavior. We will discuss the different factors that can contribute to irrationality and unconsciousness in groups, and we will provide some strategies for addressing these challenges.

**The Irrational and Unconscious in Groups**

There are a number of factors that can contribute to irrational and unconscious behavior in groups. These include:

- **Groupthink:** Groupthink is a phenomenon that occurs when group members strive for consensus at the expense of critical thinking. This can lead to groups making poor decisions, overlooking important information, and failing to consider alternative perspectives.

- **Conformity:** Conformity is the tendency to change one's behavior in order to fit in with the group. This can be a positive force, but it can also lead to individuals suppressing their true thoughts and feelings in order to avoid conflict.

- **Social loafing:** Social loafing is the tendency to exert less effort when working in a group than when working alone. This can lead to groups underperforming and failing to meet their goals.

- **Emotional contagion:** Emotional contagion is the tendency for emotions to spread from one person to another. This can lead to groups becoming polarized, as members become increasingly influenced by the emotions of those around them.

- **Unconscious bias:** Unconscious bias is a type of bias that is not consciously held or intended. It can lead to groups making decisions that are unfair or discriminatory.

**Addressing the Irrational and Unconscious in Groups**

There are a number of things that can be done to address the irrational and unconscious aspects of group behavior. These include:

- **Promoting critical thinking:** Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally about a topic. It involves being able to identify and evaluate evidence, and to consider different perspectives. Encouraging critical thinking in groups can help to reduce groupthink and conformity.

- **Encouraging diversity:** Diversity is having a variety of perspectives and experiences within a group. This can help to prevent groupthink and unconscious bias by exposing members to different ways of thinking.

- **Creating a safe space:** A safe space is an environment where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment. This can help to reduce conformity and social loafing by allowing members to express their true selves.

- **Facilitating emotional intelligence:** Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. This can help to reduce emotional contagion and polarization.

- **Addressing unconscious bias:** Unconscious bias can be addressed through training and education. This can help people to become aware of their own biases and to take steps to mitigate them.

The irrational and unconscious aspects of group behavior can be a challenge to manage. However, by understanding these factors and by

implementing the strategies outlined in this article, it is possible to create more effective and productive groups.

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