

## The Deviating Group



There are several ways in which the group self-sabotages its intention of creating platforms of shared power. Here are some of the unconscious ways through which group avoids, or deviates, from the task:

1. **Oneness**, from the work of Tourquet, whereby members resist from acting in an independent manner and, therefore, from examining their beliefs. They behave as if the group is one entity and there is no space for separation/individuation.

In terms of DEI, it would show up as individuals refusing to acknowledge differences in race, religion, socio-economic status etc – the group demonstrates resistance to conversations around DEI by playing ‘let’s pretend we are all equals/same’

2. **Me-ness**, from Lawrence, Gould, and Bain, whereby the group pays more attention to private issues and the group sets up individuals to focus only on themselves as individuals and deny the existence of the collective.

*For example:* Sometimes certain individuals from the ‘have’s’ community may escalate their feelings and demand that the group meets them at the level of their intention and refuse to look at the impact of their behaviour.

3. **Purity-pollution** from the work of Gangadhar Chattopadhyay, whereby a group or system behaves as if its survival depends on establishing unquestionable forms of hierarchy based on the idea that some are pure and some are polluting. We see some members as inherently right and others as inherently wrong.

*For example:* Group members unconsciously side up with certain members, give them some unquestionable power and idealise them – they refuse to look at the behaviour of these idealised members objectively and at the same time they reject certain other members based on their social identities or their behaviours.

4. **Dependency**, whereby members of the group obtain security from one person, often the leader. They engage with either the designated leader or the psychological leader of the group. The leader’s approval and initiation are important for the group to work.

*For example:* Any discussion around the theme of oppression and power dynamics would have to be initiated by the leader and the group would either change the topic or suppress any voice that tries to raise the issue without the leader’s approval

5. **Fight or flight**, where the group behaves as if its survival is based on fighting or fleeing.

*For example:* The group members may get into arguing, proving others wrong or completely withdrawing when there is any discussion around themes of DEI.

7. **Pairing**, where two people are set up to provide mutual intellectual and emotional support so that the other group members are pushed into silence and subservience.

*For example:* People from same race/religion/socioeconomic status may pair up in the group and hijack the possibility of any real confrontation of each other by the group members.