



**Technology  
of  
Participation**

# ***Facilitative Leadership Practicum***

*Designing events that maximize inclusive participation and profound respect*

**presented by  
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*Facilitative Leadership Training Institute  
ICA New Orleans*



# Acknowledgments

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# Objectives of the Facilitative Leadership Practicum

Notes

This Facilitative Leadership Practicum is designed to assist group process facilitators in designing participatory events that enable inclusive participation and profound respect.

The **Rational Objectives** of this training event are to:

- Discern the key factors of successful participatory events
- Review the steps of designing participatory events
- Deepen understanding of participatory philosophy and principles behind ICA's Basic Discussion and Workshop Methods
- Gain clarity on different participant styles
- Discover your "natural" facilitation style and ways to improve your facilitation
- Review the basic ToP™ facilitation methods and appropriate applications

The **Experiential Objectives** are to:

- Appreciate the critical importance of a well-designed participatory event
- Gain confidence in designing appropriate facilitation procedures
- Experience the joy of understanding your preferred participation and leadership styles
- Affirm the operating assumptions, beliefs, values, and styles of facilitative leadership



# Facilitative Leadership Practicum Agenda

## Day One

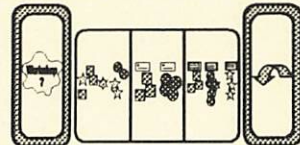
## Day Two

### SESSION ONE

#### OPENING

Introductory Conversation  
Course Intro & Overview

#### ELEMENTS of SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATORY EVENTS

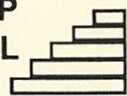


Break

Consensus Workshop  
Review

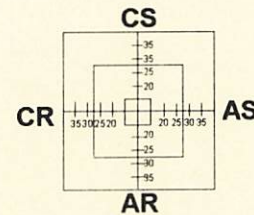
#### DESIGNING PARTICIPATORY EVENTS

##### 5-STEP MODEL



### SESSION TWO

#### PARTICIPATION STYLES



Break



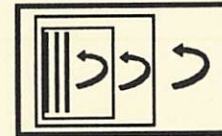
#### LEADERSHIP STYLES



REFLECTION

### SESSION THREE

#### GUIDED DIALOGUE DEMONSTRATION



Break

#### GUIDED DIALOGUE METHOD

Theory &  
Facilitation Process

#### GUIDED DIALOGUE PRACTICE

### SESSION FOUR

#### DESIGNING

#### GUIDED DIALOGUES

and

#### PARTICIPATORY EVENTS

CLOSING &  
EVALUATION



# Elements of a Successful Participatory Event

Notes

A successful participatory event always involves effective management of group process and group dynamics. There is a sense of accomplishment or well being among the participants throughout and especially at the end of the activity. If the event calls for decision making, participants experience a sense of shared ownership.

When the event is well-designed and skillfully facilitated:

- participants feel honored and respected
- participants experience a safe and level playing field or atmosphere
- participants feel free to express themselves honestly
- discussions are focused on the topic, not on personalities
- participants are not engaged in either attacking or defending ideas

## Critical Factors Behind Successful Events

1. Meets the groups's purpose
2. Right people are present
3. Event and activity objectives are clear and agreed upon
4. Procedures are realistic and clearly understood and communicated
5. Adequate time is allotted for each activity
6. Methods are appropriate to the purpose of the event
7. Skill of the facilitators



# Designing a Participatory Event

Notes

The key to a successful participatory event is a good design. The 5-step Model below is a basic framework for designing a participatory gathering or event. It is a logical and easy to follow step-by-step approach that allows a beginning facilitator to design and prepare a successful event. Use the model as a guide only. It does not list the "do's" and don'ts;" rather it offers questions to consider before preparing to facilitate the event.

## 5-STEP Model for Designing a Participatory Event

<b>step 1</b>	<b>SITUATION ANALYSIS</b> Why the event is being held? What the <b>purpose</b> of the event? How is it related to previous activities? What are the expected outcomes or results? How will you know if they happened?
<b>step 2</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT PROFILE</b> Who are the expected participants and why are they coming to the gathering?
<b>step 3</b>	<b>EVENT OBJECTIVES</b> What do you want the group to know, understand, plan, produce, do, or decide on? What do you want the group to experience?
<b>step 4</b>	<b>KEY ACTIVITIES</b> What activities (dialogue, discussions, workshops, presentations, games, etc.) will best accomplish your objectives?
<b>step 5</b>	<b>PLANS &amp; PROCEDURES</b> How are the activities organized and facilitated to ensure a successful gathering?



## step 1

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

It is very important to understand the context within which the event is being held before actually designing the event. This is done by talking with persons most concerned, reading background information, and carefully analyzing the situation in which the event is a part of.

### Points to consider:

- **PURPOSE:**  
Why is the event being held?  
What do the organizers say about the event?  
What are the given needs/concerns/expectations the event is responding to?
- **LINKAGES:**  
How is the event related to previous events or activities?  
How is the event expected to relate to future events?  
What follow-up activities are anticipated after the event?
- **RESULTS OR OUTCOMES:**  
What are the tangible results expected?  
Do different people or stakeholders expect different results?  
How will the organizers know that the event has been successful?



# *Designing a Participatory Event, continued*

Notes

## step 2

## **PARTICIPANT PROFILE**

Every successful participatory event is tailor-designed to meet the needs, expectations, and dynamics of the people who will be involved in the event.

### Points to consider:

#### • EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS:

- Who is expected to participate? How many?
- How will the participants be invited to the event?
- Why will the participants decide to attend the event?

#### • PARTICIPANT ATTRIBUTES:

- What do the participants expect from the event?
- Are their expectations realistic?
- How diverse is the group of potential participants?

#### • SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Will there be "part-time" participants?
- What are general positions or agendas that individuals may be bringing to the event?
- Are there natural/logical groupings or work teams among the expected participants?

#### • INTRA-GROUP RELATIONSHIPS:

- Are there guest speakers or non-participating people attending?
- Are there political or status relationships to be considered?
- Are there potentially "difficult people," e.g., dominating personalities, angry or upset people, etc.?





### step 3

## EVENT OBJECTIVES

Clearly articulating the intent of the event prior to designing the events is perhaps the most important step in preparing for and designing a successful participatory event. In this step the facilitator gets clear about the purpose and the objectives of the event. Why is the event being held? What does the group need to know or decide? What product or outcome is expected? What does the group need to experience during the event?

#### Points to consider:

- Based on the Situation Analysis and the Participant Profile, clearly state the objectives that the event intends to achieve.
- There are two types of objectives: the Objective Purpose or rational objective, and the Subjective Experience or experiential objective.
- There may be several different objectives for each type.

Objective Purpose	Subjective Experience
What the group needs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• know</li><li>• understand</li><li>• plan or produce</li><li>• do or decide on</li></ul>	The mood or tone of the event? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What the group needs to experience: e.g. excitement, celebration, soberness etc.</li><li>• What should happen in the group: e.g. new or deepened insights, breakthroughs, discovery, etc.</li></ul>



## step 4

## KEY ACTIVITIES

1. Decide on the type of activities that would best accomplish your purpose and event objectives. (Consensus workshop, guided dialogue, action planning, strategic planning, open dialogue, flip charting, etc.)
2. Formulate the intent for each major activity. An Objective Purpose and Subjective Experience should be determined for each activity.
3. Determine the time needed for each activity.
4. Sequence the activities into a draft agenda for the event.



## step 5

## PLANS & PROCEDURES

In order to ensure the facilitation of a successful participatory event, it is wise for the facilitator to formulate written procedures for each activity and go over these procedures with the event organizers.

1. Formulate written procedures, notes and helpful hints for each activity.
2. Consider the intent of each step of your process and determine whether the steps will accomplish your objectives.
3. Review each activity noting starting steps, expected products, breaks, and transitions from one activity to the next etc., adjusting the draft agenda if necessary.
4. If documentation is required, decide who and how this will be done.
5. Prepare a detailed agenda and share with facilitation team and the event organizers, walking through the procedures and clarifying roles.
6. Handle any administrative details:
  - room set-up, lighting, ventilation, etc.
  - check list of all needed supplies, materials, & equipment, etc.



# Participation Styles

Notes

## OVERVIEW

The **intent** of this exercise is:

- To learn how to develop and facilitate activities that foster inclusive participation by discovering how different people prefer to participate when in a group.
- To discern how one's preferred participation style affects his or her facilitation style.

Dr. Anthony F. Gregorc created the **Style Delineator** as a self-analysis tool designed to reveal how our mind works by revealing our most natural or preferred perceptual and ordering abilities. The way our mind works directly influences our preferred way to participate when in a group and our leadership style.

Every human being perceives physical and non physical phenomena **abstractly** through intellectual, symbolic, intuitive, or emotional ways and **concretely** through the physical senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Everyone also orders and authoritatively arranges, systematizes, references, or disposes of this information and experiences in a **sequential** or **random** manner.

**When perceiving life concretely**, we see the world as "the way it is." We tend to be very practical and grounded and "keep both feet on the ground." In a group, we want to understand the facts, spread sheets, or bottom-line before we are ready to make a decision. We are willing to work hard to make tangible things happen and value definite rewards and concrete evaluation.

Whereas, **when perceiving life abstractly**, we use our ability to grasp, conceive, and mentally visualize data through our faculty of reason. This allow us to emotionally and intuitively deal with inner or subjective thoughts, ideas, concepts, feelings, drives, desires, or experiences. It is the way we apprehend and perceive that which is invisible to our physical senses. When thinking abstractly, we use metaphors and symbols, perceive illusions, and sense the invisible operating in human affairs.



## *Participation Styles, continued*

Notes

**When we order information or experience sequentially,** we grasp and organize it in a linear, step-by-step, methodical, predetermined order. Information is assembled by gathering and linking elements of data and placing them together in a chain-like fashion.

Highly sequential people naturally sequence, arrange, and categorize discrete pieces of information, which results in communicating in a precise, progressive, and logically systematic manner. They are the A to Z folks, the soup to nuts people who keep everyone on schedule. However, highly sequential people often experience anxiety when information is not presented to them in a very ordered fashion. They frequently will stop the group until things "get back on track." In a group they keep to the agenda and make sharp, clear presentations.

On the other hand, **when we order information or experience randomly,** we grasp and organize information in a nonlinear, galloping, leaping, and multifarious manner. Large chunks of data are imprinted in our mind in a fraction of a second. This allows us to integrate and synthesize diverse data into new forms and patterns. Information is held in abeyance and, at any given time, each piece or chunk has equal opportunity of receiving our attention. Such information, when brought into order, may not adhere to any prior or previously agreed upon arrangement.

Thus, highly random people deal with numerous, diverse, and independent elements of information and activities simultaneously. Complex patterns of data are processed holistically. This ability results in their communicating in an active, multifaceted and "unconventional" manner. In a group they are typically "full of ideas" and frequently help a group to break through to new levels of understanding. However, highly sequential people will frequently consider their ideas or presentations to be incoherent or inconsistent!



## Participation Styles, continued

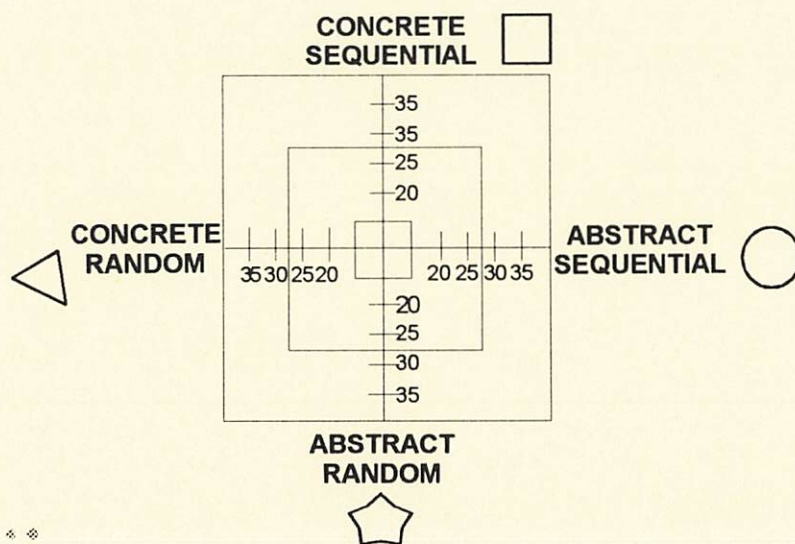
Notes

All human beings exhibit both abstract and concrete perceptual abilities as well as sequential and random ordering abilities regardless of color, culture, creed, race, or sex. However, most individuals are more sequentially oriented than random while others are more randomly oriented than sequential. Likewise some are more naturally concretely oriented than abstract and others are more abstractly oriented than concrete.

Thus, there are four basic styles which everyone has some natural ability to do, but most individuals naturally excel in one or two. A few individuals have equal ability in all four, either excelling in none or in all equally.

Concrete/Sequential	<b>CS</b>
Abstract/Sequential	<b>AS</b>
Abstract/Random	<b>AR</b>
Concrete/Random	<b>CR</b>

Each style reflects, learns, and responds to the world in which we live with different characteristics. And thus each style manifests different ways of leading and participating in a group.





# Concrete Sequential Style

Notes

**CONCRETE SEQUENTIALS** perceive the world as concrete, physical, and objective. Reality is static and predictable. Thus they are usually orderly, practical, focused, and have highly developed physical senses. The world is obvious, and they have a definite sense of how to deal with it. They apply literal meaning to verbal and written statements and do not need to see the "big picture" before beginning a task.

Concrete Sequentials find meaning in their work when focusing on the bottom line, meeting deadlines, and getting things done. They discover the nonphysical world through direct, hands-on-experiences -- like working in their gardens or working out an elegant computer solution. They follow step-by-step procedures and do not like to make adaptations or experiment with different ways to do things once they have found one that works for them.

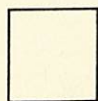
They love to talk about what they do. They find significance in practical actions. They enable others to find meaning by talking about what they do. They are very comfortable in using structured participatory methods but tend to stop the group process frequently to reflect on what the group is accomplishing or what exactly it is going to do.

Concrete Sequentials see associations in data and quickly organize almost anything they see. However, they tend to divide everything into categories of right and wrong or black and white. In a workshop or group discussion, they excel in seeing the connection between the ideas and organizing them in coherent clusters. They love the Technologies of Participation (ToP) action planning and implementation processes.

The Concrete Sequential's learning preference is characterized by the propensity to obtain information through direct, hands-on experience thus they prefer concrete examples rather than theories or abstractions. They dislike contrived experiences or simulations. They prefer techniques, which present information in successively connected parts. They like structure, e.g. specific seating, clear-cut objectives, or tests on specific days. They follow step-by-step instructions well and have a low tolerance for distraction such as noise or peripheral activities in their work or learning environments. They prefer someone to "be in-charge" and are uncomfortable when roles are not clearly defined or change.

Concrete Sequentials make good airline pilots, engineers, building contractors, or technicians.





## *Abstract Sequential Style*

*Notes*

**ABSTRACT SEQUENTIALS** live in a mental world and perceive information metaphysically and abstractly. Reality consists of words or patterns, which correspond to concrete reality. They often appear aloof, reflective, forgetful, and skeptical to the other styles. They give careful attention to detail and form and everything has a definite order. The Abstract Sequential's thinking is based on their intellect and the laws of logic.

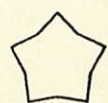
Abstract Sequentials find meaning in their work by reading or listening to concepts, ideas, or stories. They have an amazing capacity to decode words and use them with precision. They use mental matrices or intellectual formulae to analyze the world, thus they can outline, correlate, compare, and categorize information quicker than any other style. They place significance in history, tradition, scientific rationale, and academic merit and tend to formulate quick judgements.

Abstract Sequentials frequently avoid pursuing the subjective realms while in a group, view emotional displays as being irrational, and generally dislike boisterous activity. In a group discussion or workshop, they are most helpful at evaluative thinking and in the interpretation of ideas. They often can see and convincingly debate both sides of an issue and prefer to "sit on the fence" rather than come to a decision. Making a contribution to someone else's understanding of life gives their life significance. They grasp and remember the main points in a conversation or presentation. They frequently organize data in a treelike manner starting with a common core and branching into parts derived from the base or graphically represent ideas with arches or circles.

In a learning environment, Abstract Sequentials prefer to deal with models, ideas, concepts and symbols rather than concrete experiences. They love vicarious experiences. They prefer techniques and activities that are sequential, substantive, logical, rational, and require mental stimulation. They like outlines and they read and listen to lectures better than any of the other styles. They expect "people in authority" to be experts and judge them accordingly. They follow instructions or guidelines well, but they have little tolerance for distractions of any kind, needing solitude in order to concentrate on the task at hand.

Abstract Sequentials have an unconscious thirst for knowledge and are highly verbal. They frequently show up as lawyers, judges, scholars, researchers, or professors.





## *Abstract Random Style*

*Notes*

**ABSTRACT RANDOMS** perceive underlying patterns that are invisible to others. Since they sense them intuitively, it frequently confounds and surprises others. The Abstract Random's world is one of feelings and imagination. It is a fluid, incessantly-active world. They tend to be emotional, enthusiastic, empathic, imaginative, and self motivated. They bring an intense interest in and involvement with the "human element" or human relationships within any group. They stay naturally attuned to nuance of atmosphere and mood.

Abstract Randoms order information holistically. For them, experiences are "happenings" with many causes joining naturally to form an event. They read body language easily and are aware of another person's "vibrations." They find meaning in their ability to sense and feel and by engaging in multisensory activities. Abstract Randoms seek out subjective signals of approval and disapproval and tend to view things either positively or negatively.

In a group their energy and enthusiasm help to spark the discussion and move the group along on frequently nonlinear paths. When it is time to reflect on an event or clusters of information, the Abstract Randoms can often generate insights that pull together the treads of unity or consensus for the group or guide it in new direction.

In a learning environment, they prefer subjective, affective, unstructured, or abstract experiences. They learn best with multisensory activities. They seem to gather information and delay a reaction until they can organize it through individual reflection or meditation. They tend to associate the medium with the message and tie a speaker's manner, delivery, and personality to the message being conveyed. They require only minimal guidelines or structure and have a strong preference for "guide-like" or collegial relationships with teachers or others in authority. They are not prone to follow instructions, deadlines, or exact amounts carefully. They prefer an overview before being asked to follow pre-programmed steps. They are able to focus in noisy and busy environments and have a high tolerance for distractions.

Abstract Randoms are natural counselors, advisors, mentors, volunteers and speakers. They frequently like to sing, dance, collect antiques, or take care of plants.



## Concrete Random Style

Notes

**CONCRETE RANDOMS** use the physical world as a starting point to explore the nature and significance of things. They are the folks who always have interesting ideas and will actually do something with them. They are intuitive, quick, impulsive, adventurous, competitive, optimistic, independent, inspirational and love challenges. Concrete Randoms are concerned with the process and intrigued with the way in which things function. They are skeptical of linear approaches. They tend to order things in three-dimensional patterns.

Concrete Randoms find meaning in their work by experimenting with their ideas, discovering "why" something works, exploring the significance or meaning in the task. They like to use a variety of methods of communication and to creatively adapt or change other people's ideas. They tend to experiment with new ideas or ways of doing something but adapt them to meet their needs. However, they do not tend to follow any particular method for long periods of time.

Concrete Randoms work best in small groups. In a group, they will generate a lot of great ideas, but hesitate to give you a definite position on anything. Concrete Randoms get the gist of ideas quickly and then tend to "jump to conclusions." They frequently make "intuitive leaps" which defy human logic but result in creative formulations. However these "leaps" are frequently difficult to communicate to other styles. They see multiple solutions to any problem and persist in finding out why, exploring the significance or meaning, and predicting possibilities. They tend to resist creating priorities and formal sequences of action.

Concrete Randoms learn through concrete examples and practice. Experimentation is the easiest way they learn and they are less afraid to try new things than any of the other styles. They prefer a multiple of options and alternative approaches to reaching objectives but will follow common guidelines. They expect "those in authority" to be both "instructors" and guides. They respond to both internal and external rewards at the same time, thus an unearned grade or award is not appreciated. They dislike step-by-step procedures and often start a project or take a test without reading the directions. They prefer a stimulus-rich environment with people and other resources available at call. They can concentrate well in moderately distracting environments.

Concrete Randoms are natural artists, problem solvers, troubleshooters, and leaders. However, they like to change jobs frequently.





Technology  
of  
Participation

# *Facilitation Methods*

## PARTICIPANT MANUAL



# Introduction

Notes




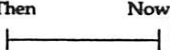
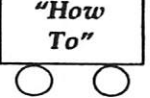






**Participatory facilitation methods** are practical tools for enabling highly energized, productive, inclusive and meaningful participation. All groups and organizations rely on how well their leadership is able to inspire, catalyze, and sustain shared learnings and decision making. Structured participation enables deeper levels of commitment, greater capacity for sharing wisdom, and owning the decisions arrived at collectively. It enables groups to be more responsive to change and more creative in implementation. It encourages and develops broad-based initiative and responsibility. When used effectively and consistently, it gives the group a sense of both inner and outer well being.

For inclusive participation to work, however, effective facilitation skills and methods are needed. Without the methods, "participation" simply slides into a situation where anyone and everyone can say and do whatever they individually want to do—and this often means that little is accomplished, and many involved feel their precious time, money and energy have been wasted. Effective methods can make it possible for inclusive participation to happen as a creative, productive, and even empowering experience.



# Leadership Styles

Notes

	TRADITIONAL	SERVANT		
	HIERARCHICAL	SYMBOLIC	BUREAUCRATIC	FACILITATIVE
A S S U M E S	Top Down Authority 	Power of Influence:  Respect & Permission to Lead	Power of Authority & Assignment  • Division Head • Department Supervisor • Team Leader	Power of the Group's Diversity  MANY PERSPECTIVES 
K N O W S	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____  WHAT to do	Breadth/Depth Context & 	How the System Works & the History (Past Decisions)  Then                  Now 	METHODS  "How To" 
S E E K S	The "RIGHT"   Decision	To Inspire  also...Wise & Prudent Decisions	Workable Solutions, Compliance & To Get Things Done	Decisions the Group   Will Own
R E L I E S O N	INDIVIDUAL Ability Charisma Expertise 	  VISION	Problem-Solving Expertise & STRUCTURES 	  GROUP Ability

Today, effective leadership is moving toward understanding that it must manifest a balance between symbolic, bureaucratic, and facilitative leadership styles and away from the more familiar and traditional top down hierarchical style.

These styles, outlined in the graphic chart to the left, are dynamics that may at times be fulfilled by the same individual, at times played by different individuals, and at still other times shared by a core group of leaders.

However, when these styles are not balanced in the leadership of a group, one or more style tends to dominate. When the symbolic style is dominating, the leader wants his or her own way and presumes unwarranted power. The dominating bureaucratic leader assumes "your issue is not our concern." A dominant facilitative style can waste a community's time and energy by using process solely for the sake of process. Under top down hierarchical leadership, people lose interest, fail to invest their imagination, and become uncooperative or unresponsive.

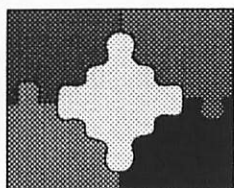
The Technology of Participation (ToP™)

facilitation methods help a group draw on accumulated group experience to create the needed organizational structures to get things done and provide the group's leadership with processes that maximizes the group's creativity, decisions, capacities and abilities.



# Underlying Assumptions of Facilitative Leadership

Notes



## 1. INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

Facilitative leadership invites and sustains the participation of all members of the group. It recognizes that each member of the group has something important to contribute, each holds an important piece of the puzzle.

## 2. TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION

Facilitative leadership assumes that teamwork and collaboration produce better results.



## 3. INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY



Facilitative leadership can bring out the best of both rational and intuitive thinking capacities, as well as engaging the whole person.

## 4. CONSENSUS & OWNERSHIP

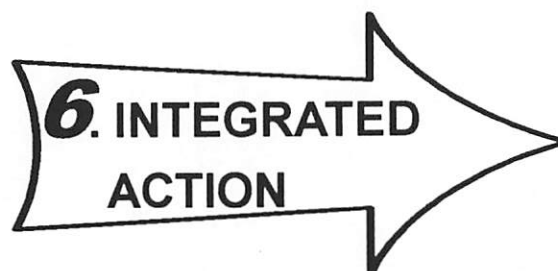
Facilitative leadership strives to arrive at decisions that are owned and supported by all the members of the group.



## 5. REFLECTION & LEARNING



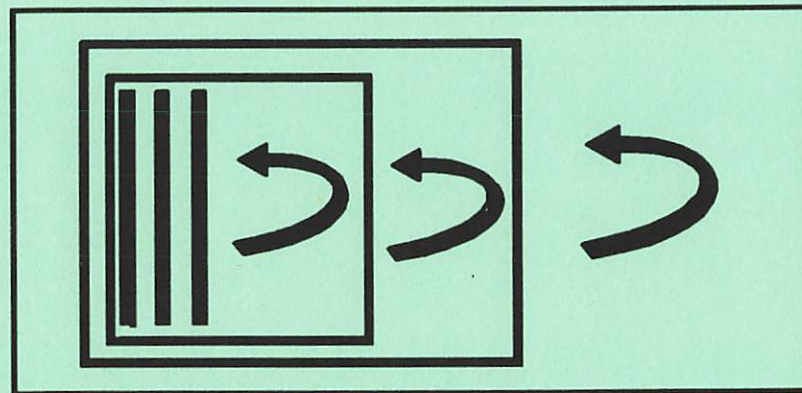
Facilitative leadership understands that learning and positive transformation does not occur without depth reflection.



Facilitative leadership has the capacity to produce integrated individual and collective action.



# *Guided Dialogue Method*





# Introduction to Guided Dialogue Method

Notes

Have you ever been in a conversation where it was difficult to determine where the discussion was leading? Or where someone has dominated the discussion to the exclusion of everyone else? Or even where people just go on talking and fail to really communicate? We can all identify with the experience of sitting in meetings at which we could not tell for certain what decisions had been made, or how and why certain decisions had not been reached. In all these situations, what has been lacking is an effective structure for conversation to take place.

The GUIDED DIALOGUE METHOD provides us with a structure for effective dialogue in groups, providing a basis for communication where a sense of meaning, purpose and significance can emerge.

The method works because it follows a natural, human thinking and reflective process. When you enter into any conversation, a similar process is used. You observe who is in the room, hear talking, become immediately aware of liking or disliking what is being said or the way it is being said, interpret what it means, and respond by choosing to enter the conversation, remain silent, or leave the room. The choice is influenced by the connections made with the flow of meaning within yourself and the other people in the room. This is normally swift and unconscious and it occurs all the time. In GUIDED DIALOGUE, this natural process is simply slowed down to help it become mindful.

The Guided Dialogue process guides the group through four interactive, but distinctive levels of self reflection.

1. Objective - engaging the senses (sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch)
2. Responsive - eliciting imaginative, intuitive and/or emotional responses
3. Interpretive - catalyzing the sharing of experiences and individual meaning
4. Depth - developing a shared sense of purpose and meaning

Self reflection results in shifts in consciousness, self knowledge, and self understanding. It is the skillful use of questions that provide an environment for collective thinking to take place within a limited time frame.

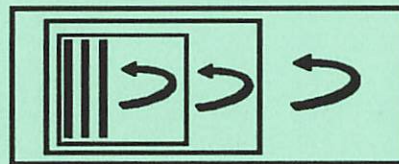


## *Introduction to the Guided Dialogue Method, continued*

Notes

A major advantage of the GUIDED DIALOGUE METHOD is its versatility. It works well with groups where the individual members do not know each other and with groups in which they do. It works with a group that may never be together again as well as with well-established groups. It works with people of diverse or homogeneous backgrounds and ages.

The process incorporates the rational, emotional, and experiential responses of the participants. It is appropriate for multiple types of conversations.



## *Common Applications of the Guided Dialogue Method*

There are hundreds of uses for the Guided Dialogue. Some of the more common applications include using it to:

- collect data and ideas
- discuss tough issues
- reflect on important issues and events
- prepare for a problem-solving session
- work as a group on presentations or reports
- discover the diversity of perspectives in any group on a topic, issue, or experience
- diffuse anxiety surrounding uncertainties or issues
- analyze accomplishments or failures, thus turning them into learning experiences
- focus multiple interests on a particular topic or issue
- increase understanding of "givens" in a situation
- explore levels of consensus that may already exist around a topic
- avoid heated arguments by provoking thoughtful dialogue
- move any discussion to a productive end



# Guided Dialogue Method Overview

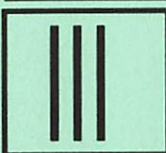
Notes

**Topic:** The focus or subject of the dialogue. It sets the boundaries of what the group will talk about.

**Objective Purpose:** The rational intent or practical goal of the dialogue. It guides the collective thinking process and determines the direction of the conversation.

**Subjective Experience:** The experiential aim or inner impact of the dialogue. It affects the mood of the group and sets the tone of the communication between participants.

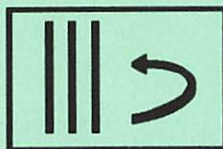
**Introduction/Opening:**  
Setting the stage, introducing the topic



## Level One ~ Objective:

*Engaging the five senses (sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch)*

- Gets people's attention with questions that are easy to answer
- Invites inclusive participation
- Gets out the facts and data or information



## Level Two ~ Responsive:

*Eliciting participants' imaginative, intuitive and/or emotional responses*

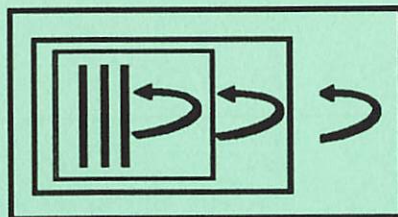
- Acknowledges emotions, memories and initial associations
- Some questions require participants to use their imagination
- Opens a channel to the right brain



## Level Three ~ Interpretive:

*Catalyzing the sharing of experiences and individual meaning*

- Relates the topic to personal and other experiences
- Illuminates participants' relationships to the topic
- Reveals individual meaning and values
- Initiates collective consciousness



## Level Four ~ Depth:

*Developing a shared sense of purpose and meaning*

- Exposes future resolves and/or shared perspectives
- Opens the group to the universal dimension of life
- Draws out the participants' latent knowledge, exposing deeper meaning

**Reflect/Closing:**  
Confirms and affirms the group's experience and resolve



# Guided Dialogue Method: Sample Dialogue

**Topic:** Dialogue on the underlying themes of a healthy community

Bracketed [ ] questions optional

**Objective Purpose:** Clearly understand and appreciate value of the underlying themes

**Subjective Experience:** Commitment to a shared sense of purpose; excitement about launching the program

**Introduction/Opening:** (5 minutes) Let us take 45 minutes and look at the underlying themes created by the Louisiana Dept. of Public Health for the Healthy Communities Program. Read themes aloud. Pass out a copy of the themes and reread them as participants follow along. (Or have participant/s read them aloud a second time.)



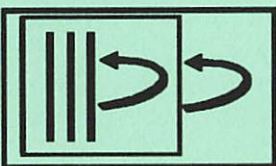
**Level One ~ Objective:** (3 minutes)

- What word or words jumped out at you?
- What other phrases stuck in your mind?



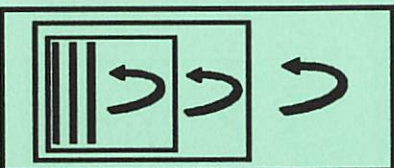
**Level Two ~ Responsive:** (12 minutes)

- Which one is the most clear to you? [Which one comes to you as new or fresh?]
- Which one seems pretty "same old, same old"?
- What visual pictures or images came to mind as the themes were read?
- What color would you associate with any or all of the themes?
- Which one were you most drawn to? Why? [Which one is the most difficult to get your mind around? Why? Which one will make the most difference? Why?]



**Level Three ~ Interpretive:** (15 minutes)

- Which themes are already embraced by our community? How are they being acted out?
- How have other communities dealt with these themes?
- In order to embrace all of these themes in our community, what kinds of things will have to change? [What challenges will have to be overcome?]
- [What are some of the important decisions we will have to make?]
- Which one do you see yourself helping to manifest? How?



**Level Four ~ Depth:** (10 minutes)

- What are these themes really about? (Wait in silence for an answer.)
- What will this mean for the health of our community?

## Intent of Each Level:

- Get participants' attention with easy questions
- Invite participation
- Recall words and phrases
- Evoke the use of one's imagination
- Reflect on the themes
- Enable participants to become personally engaged in the dialogue
- Connect the themes to participants' community
- Empower participants to identify with others
- Build community within the group
- Help participants to internalize the themes
- Reveal relationship of the themes to the health of the community
- Deepen participants' sense of ownership
- Expose shared meanings

**Closing:** I don't know about you, but I'm really excited about getting started!



# Preparation for an Effective Guided Dialogue

Notes

## GETTING STARTED

*Determining the focus, purpose, & mood of the dialogue*  
*Brainstorming the questions for your dialogue*

### STEPS

1. Decide in what way the topic relates to the group and give it as specific and clear a focus as possible.
2. Write out your Objective Purpose and Subjective Experience for the dialogue.
3. Review the intents of each level of the dialogue process.
4. Brainstorm questions that might realize your Objective Purpose.

### PREPARATION TIPS

Decide the focus or subject of the dialogue. It will set the boundaries of what the group will talk about.

The quality and outcome of the conversation depend upon how much the facilitator has thought through the purpose or reasons for the conversation and just what s(he) wants to accomplish with the dialogue.

- The Objective Purpose is the rational intent or practical goal of the dialogue. It guides the collective thinking process and determines the direction of the conversation. Ask yourself what you want the group to know, learn, discover, explore, or decide.
- The Subjective Experience is the aim or inner impact of the dialogue. It affects the mood of the group and sets the tone of the communication between the participants. Ask yourself how you want the group to experience, e.g. helpful struggle or mutual trust, or how do you want the group to "be?" e.g. will they be excited or intrigued with a new idea?

When brainstorming possible questions, just write down the questions that flow out intuitively in whatever order they occur to you. By writing each question on a separate post-it, you can organize them by level later as you finalize your set of questions. It is important to remember that not all the questions will be used or several might need to be reworded to better fit into the level and flow of the dialogue.



## CREATING OBJECTIVE LEVEL QUESTIONS

*Engage the five senses (sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch)*

- Get participant's attention with questions that are easy to answer
- Invite inclusive participation
- Get out the facts and objective data or information

### STEPS

5. Choose your Objective Level Questions from your list.
6. Rephrase questions to make them as simple as possible and thus very easy for any participant to answer.
7. Check to make sure your questions will elicit only an immediate response of 1-5 words.

### PREPARATION TIPS

Be sure that the first questions you will ask are very precise and very specific. They should be very easy to answer for they are just asking for facts, easily observable objective data, or obvious initial sensory responses.

As you lead this section of the dialogue, remember there are no *wrong answers* to these questions. You are out to get as many different answers as possible in the time allowed.

Inclusive participation is assured if you can get every participant to answer at least one of the questions at this level; thus, you may plan to go around the room. However, keep the pace very quick, honoring each answer with equal affirmation.



# Sample Objective Questions

Notes

1. What do you see? (What did you see?)
2. What did you hear?
3. What words stand out?
4. What are some of the things we did today?
5. Who were the characters? Who was there?
6. What colors do you see?
7. What shapes do you see?
8. What are some events you recall in the past year?
9. How many animals were in the film? Which ones?
10. What were the characters' names?
11. What did you hear Mr/s. \_\_\_\_\_ say?
12. What do you notice about this new form?
13. What are some of the new features on this case?
14. Who was present at the meeting? Who spoke?
15. What topics were discussed?
16. How many people attended?
17. What scenes do you remember?
18. What sounds did you hear?
19. What happened, chronologically?
20. What facts do we know about this situation?
21. What articles have been published on this topic?
22. What caught your attention about \_\_\_\_\_?
23. When did we do that?
24. What are some memorable events of your childhood?
25. What are some teams you've been a part of?
26. Who do you remember from your team?
27. What headlines have caught your attention this week?
28. What lines of dialogue do you recall?
29. What did \_\_\_\_\_ say to \_\_\_\_\_?
30. What do we already know about this subject?
31. What facts have been established?
32. What data has been gathered so far?
33. What was the sequence of events?
34. What sections did you underline?
35. What background music were you aware of?
36. Who were the people mentioned?
37. What were the elements of the story?
38. What picture illustrated the story/article?
39. What do you think of first when I say the word(s) \_\_\_\_\_?
40. What were the key points in the speech?
41. How many key points did the speaker make?
42. What were the events leading to...?
43. What are the chapter headings?
44. What objects do you see?
45. What comments were made?
46. What behaviors or responses have you observed?
47. How many parents/teachers/ children attended?
48. Where did people sit?
49. When did we last discuss this topic?
50. What happened first?



## CREATING RESPONSIVE LEVEL QUESTIONS

*Elicit participants' imaginative, intuitive and/or emotional responses*

- Some questions require participants to use their imagination
- Evoke emotions, memories and initial associations
- Open channel to the right brain and intuitive thinking

### STEPS

8. List those questions that draw out emotional, intuitive, or imaginative answers.
9. Order questions that invite positive responses first and negative second.
10. Arrange final list of questions, beginning with simpler, moving to more complex.

### PREPARATION TIPS

It is extremely important to design questions that elicit the imagination in order to get more powerful and honest comments and perspectives later on. These questions and answers should draw forth many diverse responses, associations and images.

This level of questions can be a bit tricky to devise, given that some participants will not be used to noticing their emotional responses, much less sharing them in a group. However, as individuals respond to the questions, what they share at this level will begin to trigger more awareness and enable them to become personally engaged in the dialogue.

Remember that no matter how "rational" the topic may be, emotional and "subjective" responses will find their way into the dialogue. Your job as a facilitator is to structure the questions to invite these at this level, where they will strengthen and support rather than detract from the objectives of the dialogue at a later point.



# Sample Responsive Questions

Notes

1. What do you imagine was the reason for \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What parts reminded you of your own \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Where do you find yourself ambivalent?
4. What brought out your anger?
5. Where were you anxious?
6. What made you feel appreciated?
7. What came to you as really beautiful?
8. What made you want to place blame?
9. What seemed boring?
10. What is on target?
11. What seems certain?
12. What is most exciting?
13. What did you find charming about it?
14. Where are you really clear?
15. What would make you feel more comfortable?
16. What calls you to make a commitment?
17. What requires your compassion?
18. What pieces are competing?
19. What concerns you?
21. What was annoying?
22. What seems really complicated?
23. Where are you confident?
24. Where were people alienated?
25. What has you confused?
26. What gives you courage?
28. Where do you feel your creative juices getting stirred up?
29. What seems the most critical?
30. Is this more like "x" (e.g. an ice cream sundae) or "y" (e.g. a peanut butter & jelly sandwich)?
31. What parts do you feel detached from? Or feel they just aren't important?
32. What are you most doubtful about?
33. Where were you irritated?
34. What brought out a sense of harmony?
35. What was inspiring?
36. What color would you add? Why?
37. Where did you find yourself a little jealous?
38. Where did you find yourself judging?
39. What was liberating?
40. What filled you with longing?
41. What was most painful?
42. Where were you elated?
43. What gave you a sense of panic?
44. What was especially pleasing? or displeasing?
45. What caused you to feel pressured?
46. What would it be like if \_\_\_\_\_?
47. What was most intense?
48. What was really easy? most difficult?
49. Where are you resigned?
50. What do you intuit will be most important?



## CREATING INTERPRETIVE LEVEL QUESTIONS

*Catalyze the sharing of experiences and individual meaning*

- Relate topic to personal and other experiences
- Illuminate participants' relationships to the topic
- Elicit sharing of individual meanings and values
- Initiate collective consciousness

### STEPS

11. List those questions that require that the participants to share experiences.
12. Place questions that require answers that describe what they have observed in the world or in others before asking for personal experiences.
13. Then list questions that consider the meaning or significance of the topic.
14. Order from easiest to more complex.

### PREPARATION TIPS

The questions in this level of the dialogue are preparing the group for a resolution, transformation, or commitment of some kind about the topic. It is at this level that connections are made among the group and to the topic.

The questions at this level build off the first two levels, adding meaning, significance, value, importance, or purpose to the situation, topic, or dialogue.

In leading this section, allow multiple opinions, perspectives, points of view, and experiences to be shared.

This level usually takes the most time since the questions call for a deeper response.

At this level in the dialogue, the group may leave the specifics of the topic and move further or deeper into areas that have been allowed to surface from the beginning. You will begin to observe your objectives for the dialogue coming to fruition.



# Sample Interpretive Questions

Notes

1. What were some of the key points made?
2. What is this about?
3. What assumption is being called into question?
4. What is the importance of this?
5. Where was the turning point?
6. What new vantage point has this given us?
7. What new insight did you get from reading this?
8. What would you call or name this?
9. What difference will it make?
10. What are some of the decisions that we will have to make?
11. How does this effect our future?
12. What would you say lies underneath these issues?
13. How has this been beneficial to you personally?
14. How will you apply what you have learned?
15. Why was this point important to you?
16. What are our strengths? weaknesses?
17. How did it meet your expectations?
18. What appears to be the central issue or key problem area?
19. What other things do we need to consider?
20. What kind of decisions do we need to make as a group?
21. What will keep us on track?
22. What are some of the first steps we need to take?
23. What is being recommended here?
24. What are the main points of this presentation?
26. What questions did this raise for you?
28. What insights are beginning to emerge?
29. What is the root cause of these issues?
30. What are our gifts? weaknesses?
31. How will you apply this?
32. When have you experienced this?
33. What does this look like?
34. In a few words, what is this saying?
35. Where do you see this taking place in other people?
36. In what other situations has this occurred?
37. Where do you see this taking place in your own life?
38. Where has this occurred within yourself?
39. What is really happening with \_\_\_\_\_?
40. What would it mean for you to act this out?
41. What assumptions has he/she made?
42. What name would you give to it?
43. What did this remind you of?
44. How have other groups dealt with these issues?
45. What other organizations do this?
46. What aspects are you already doing? What does it look like?
47. Which one do you see yourself doing?
48. What kinds of changes will we need to make?
49. What have others done with this?
50. What is the value of this?
51. What are the values we are holding here?



## CREATING DEPTH LEVEL QUESTIONS

### *Develop a shared sense of purpose and meaning*

Expose future resolves, decisions, and/or shared perspectives

Open the group to the universal dimension of life

Draw out the participants' latent knowledge, exposing deeper meaning

### STEPS

15. List depth questions and revise them to best reveal the depth dimension of the topic.
16. Create questions that allow the group to be aware of their relationship to the topic.
17. Think through how you will slow down the pace of the dialogue, allowing for silence and depth thinking.

### PREPARATION TIPS

Questions at this level need to draw out what all "this" (their dialogue) means in the bigger picture of their lives or their work together. It is the level where the participants have the opportunity to go within and look at what might be termed "final" or "ultimate" meanings or wisdom.

Your job as a facilitator is to allow the group to share at the deepest level possible or appropriate for the group by providing the atmosphere where participants will be willing to risk vulnerability and trust the group with their deepest insights. Today, this is often accomplished by allowing time for silence. This means that when you ask a question and people don't jump in with responses, relax. Wait. Let them ponder the question in the silence. The greatest value comes in letting the depths rise out of the silence.

There may be times that decisions need to be made on the other side of the dialogue. The deeper the dialogue, the better the decisions will be. However, don't hesitate to use this level to ask what decisions the group needs to make now and get out several answers. You might even write them down and move on. If they aren't yet clear, ask how might clarity be reached or what the next steps might be.



# Sample Depth Questions

Notes

1. What are these themes really about?
2. What will this mean?
3. Describe what this will mean to you.
4. Tell a story about what this is about.
5. What does this have to say about the way we have been doing it?
6. How is this true?
7. What would it look like for you to act in this way?
8. What does it mean to experienced this?
9. What real difference will it make?
10. So just what have we decided?
11. What does this mean for our future?
12. What would you say lies underneath these issues?
13. How would you title this?
14. So, just what you have learned?
15. If we did this again, what would we change?
16. How will you talk about this event to someone who was not here?
17. What are you really expecting the results to be?
18. What is the central issue or key problem area?
19. What are we really committed to?
20. What decisions do we need to make as a group?
21. Then what are the first steps we need to take?
22. What is being recommended here?
23. What is the real point of this presentation?
24. What is the resolve of this group?
25. How would you articulate our consensus?



## ADDING THE FINISHING TOUCHS

*Assuring your questions accomplish your objectives*

### STEPS

18. Go over your questions, answering each one yourself and noticing the kind of answers you get. Revise if necessary.
19. Prepare your opening and closing remarks.
20. Examine & finalize your entire conversation making sure the questions flow and will achieve the intent of each level and accomplish your objectives.
21. Decide final sequence and put them in the form you will use while leading the dialogue.

### PREPARATION TIPS

Check to see that there are multiple answers to every question other than "yes," "no," "maybe," or "I don't know."

Your brief opening remarks need to state the topic and relate it to the present situation and the groups' concerns in an invitational manner. You may need to state a few of your assumptions before the dialogue begins, e.g. "everyone has wisdom," or "there are no wrong answers."

Your closing remarks can be a brief statement of appreciation, a bridge to what will come next, or one sentence on your personal sense of where the group is.

Remember you probably will not use all your brainstorm questions and you will be developing questions that will better accomplish the intent of each level as you reorder and revise your plan.

Your final sequencing of the questions should help the group experience one seamless dialogue in which their answers flow like a collective stream of consciousness.

As you prepare, be sure that you take the time to answer every question yourself. This helps to you develop clearer questions. If possible go over your questions with an experienced facilitator.



# Guided Dialogue Method Worksheet

Notes

Topic:

Objective Purpose:

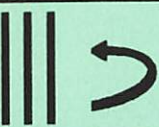
Subjective Experience:

Introduction/Opening:

Your Intent at Each Level:



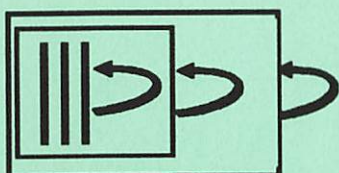
Level One ~ Objective: [\_\_minutes]



Level Two ~ Responsive: [\_\_minutes]



Level Three ~ Interpretive: [\_\_minutes]



Level Four ~ Depth: [\_\_minutes]

Reflect/Closing: [\_\_minutes]



# Guidelines for a Dialogue Facilitator

Notes

While the Dialogue Method is a relatively simple method to learn, it is perhaps one of the more difficult ones to master. Part of the value of the method is that it may be applied to almost any conversation from informal chats with family and friends to meetings at work that are discussing issues or actions of a strategic nature. It works well in a one-on-one setting and can be designed to be used with groups of several hundred. A good way to practice this process is to apply it to your own thinking and reflective processes. It will frequently give you more clarity, sharpen your focus, and reveal greater depths. As with most skills, it is constant practice that will give you mastery of the method. When using the Dialogue Method, it helps to be familiar and comfortable with several common situations, and to know how experienced facilitators handle them. You will gradually develop your own ways of handling them, ways that best suit your own personality and facilitative leadership style. But until then, here are some specific recommendations that can get you started.

SITUATION	WHAT TO DO	EXAMPLES
1. Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assure a pleasant climate with an uncluttered, tidy space.</li> <li>Provide a context as the session begins e.g. what we are going to do is important.</li> <li>First questions should be asked with precision. It is wise to have them written down before you start.</li> <li>Go around the group and get a response from everyone at the objective level.</li> </ul>	<p>"Let's get started. Jim, will you please shut the door. At the annual meeting we decided to establish a more effective communication system. We need to get this in place quickly and smoothly to ensure participation of the entire community. What are the elements of the communication system we are <u>now</u> using?"</p>
2. Keeping Track of Ideas (only when the dialogue warrants it)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may write brief phrases on your own note pad after each response if you can maintain eye contact while doing so.</li> <li>You may ask one or two participants to take notes</li> <li>Use notes to recap between questions.</li> <li>Use notes for writing reports.</li> </ul>	<p>"You mentioned these elements." (Read back the list) "Which is most crucial to...?"</p>



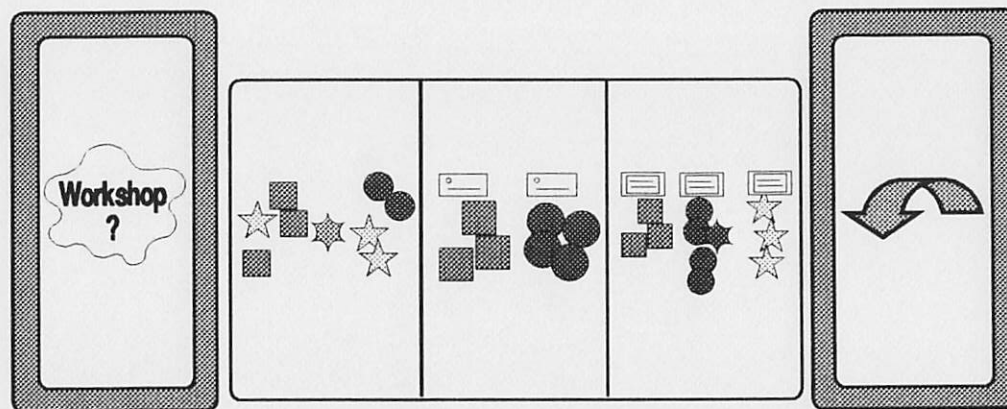
# Guidelines for a Dialogue Facilitator, continued

Notes

SITUATION	WHAT TO DO	EXAMPLES
3. Keeping the Dialogue Going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If nobody answers, repeat the question; reword or rephrase only as a last resort.</li> <li>If participants are going off the topic, repeat the question.</li> <li>If someone grandstands or talks for a long time, ask if someone else has a specific example.</li> </ul>	<p>"Someone else, how will a new communication system affect the community?"</p>
4. Maintaining Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When the group begins to stray off the subject, recap briefly what has been said so far.</li> <li>Acknowledge and "bracket" the distraction.</li> <li>Repeat the question.</li> </ul>	<p>"That is an important concern. Let's bring it up next time we do a problem analysis. Now, someone say how the new communications system will affect the community?"</p>
5. Keeping the Dialogue Practical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give a practical example yourself.</li> <li>When an answer is abstract or very judgmental in nature, ask for an example from participant's own experience.</li> </ul>	<p>"The announcement board in the lounge caught my eye the other morning. What are some other practical examples of good communication?"</p>
6. Resolving Disagreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You don't have to. It is helpful to have many points of view in the discussion.</li> <li>If people argue, don't take sides, but ask the group if there are any <i>other</i> viewpoints.</li> <li>If someone disagrees, ask them to share his or her idea with the group.</li> </ul>	<p>"Strong feelings are okay, but let's get a wide range of ideas before moving on."</p> <p>"It looks like we have at least three angles to cover. Are there any others?"</p>
7. Bringing the Dialogue to a Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review what was discussed.</li> <li>If you made notes, let the group know how the results will be used or when they will receive a copy.</li> <li>Note that some dialogues are held to merely clear the air or share viewpoints and won't have other results.</li> </ul>	<p>"We have covered a lot of ground in just a few minutes. Now let's move on to the problem solving workshop to decide on the specific actions we might take."</p>



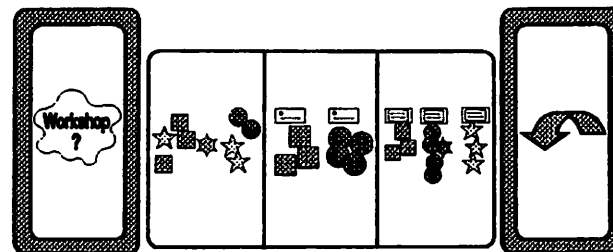
# ***Consensus Workshop Method***





# Introduction to the Consensus Workshop Method

Notes



Have you ever been in a group where it seemed impossible to come to a decision? Or where the vote was 50/50 with little apparent common ground? Or where there seemed no way for the group to agree or reach consensus and compromise left everyone feeling (s)he had given up something important?

The CONSENSUS WORKSHOP METHOD provides us with a method for coming to consensus in a short period of time through a collective integrated thinking process. When consensus is reached, all participants feel that their ideas, insights, perspectives, or wisdom has been honored and that the consensus includes them. No one feels that they have had "to give up something" in order for the group to move forward or in order for the group to reach a decision.

The process works because it is a useful way of getting information and insights from all participants, quickly organizing it, and discerning where the consensus lies. This collective thinking process allows a group to see immediately the extent of agreement that already exists on the subject at hand and to easily reach a productive conclusion, as well as to document everyone's input and the areas of consensus.

A well-constructed workshop has 5 parts:

1. A clear context covering the focus of the workshop, time frame and anticipated product
2. Brainstorming, both individually and as a group
3. Organizing the brainstorm using a rationale that fits the topic
4. Articulating the elements of consensus
5. A closing reflection on the significance, learnings, and implications



## *Introduction to the Consensus Workshop Method, continued*

*Notes*

When a consensus is reached, each member of the group has ownership of the entire group's decisions, experiences his/her personal wisdom as having expanded, and can now operate in concert with the rest of the group.

The process generates group creativity and energizes individuals as it facilitates the formulation of innovative and practical solutions to problems, issues, or visions while infusing each member of the group with a strong sense of ownership, responsibility, and personal empowerment. One major advantage of the **CONSENSUS WORKSHOP METHOD** is its simple inclusiveness. It provides a way for each individual to do their own thinking, includes everyone's participation, provides a way for each insight to have equal weight regardless of the role or "position" of its author, and elicits the natural gifts of each participant.

Documentation of workshop results honors each individual's participation. One way to document the results is to create a simple chart with the titles representing the consensus at the top and the individual comments from each related card underneath. A sample is included here. It provides a summary of participants' responses to the question "What are the components of a healthy community?" Remember that effective documentation captures participants' actual words, even if there is duplication or a further summary included. People see the final written product and say, "See? That was my idea." It builds ownership and the motivation to see something come of their work.

### **Workshop Materials List**

1. Flip chart pad and stand
2. 75-100 1/2 sheets of paper. Recycled paper can be used if it is blank on one side.
3. A roll of masking tape
4. Magic markers (Choose colors—like dark blue, green, black, brown, purple—that can easily be seen when writing on the flip chart or 1/2 sheets. Note that some people often have difficulty seeing red marker.)
5. Pencils or pens and paper (the 1/2 sheets can be used) for people to make individual notes.
6. A large (minimum size 3' by 6') paper or cloth that has been sprayed with Spray Mount Artist's Adhesive



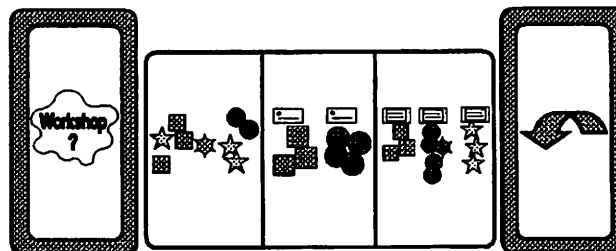
# Common Applications

Notes

There are hundreds of uses for the Consensus Workshop Method. Some of the more common applications include using it to:

- coordinate departments with differing objectives
- create a shared vision, goals, or objectives
- set team priorities
- agree on criteria for decisions
- find common ground among parties with opposing views or perspectives
- identify barriers or blocks to effective communications
- motivate volunteers or team members
- restructure or realign job functions
- create alignment in teams
- discover the group's hopes and dreams
- do weekly individual/staff planning or operational planning
- develop quality improvements
- develop policy
- prepare team reports or presentations
- create or update training curriculum components

All these are situations where you want a group to reach a consensus. Note that a Guided Dialogue is **not** designed to help a group quickly reach a consensus.





# The Consensus We Seek in ToP™

Notes

## The Consensus We Seek in Technologies of Participation

### Is Not So Much...

### As It Is...

Majority rule—winners and losers . . . . .	A convergence of the common sense of the total group
Unanimity—everyone in complete agreement . . . . .	That which allows everyone to say yes and move forward
Compromise—accepting a “lowest common denominator” result . . . . .	Finding and creating arenas of shared understanding
Deciding which ideas to accept and which to reject . . . . .	Insuring that every idea is accepted and honored
A fixed, final and unchangeable conclusion . . . . .	A working conclusion at a particular point in time
A result of focusing on things that divide a group . . . . .	A result of focusing on things that unify a group
Settling for partial solutions from limited alternatives . . . . .	Designing effective solutions from expanded alternatives
Acceding to the most vocal individuals in the group. . . . .	Eliciting the best wisdom the whole group is capable of
The imposition of the strongest will or wills upon a group . . . . .	The emergence of a corporate will within the group
A legalistic contract which demands people's compliance . . . . .	A mutual covenant which elicits people's commitment
A logical deduction from the data . . . . .	An intuitive leap from the data
Focused on old assumptions . . . . .	Focused on new possibilities
All too familiar formulations (“Ho hum” — “Oh, that”) . . . . .	Fresh ways of seeing and naming (“Hmm!” — “Aha!”)
A result of persistent advocacy for a particular position . . . . .	A result of proposals made, then offered up to the group
Getting everyone to “buy in” to a process or product . . . . .	Insuring everyone's ownership of the process and product
Challenging and criticizing others' ideas . . . . .	Valuing and utilizing the insights in others' ideas
Harmony dependent on people having similar views . . . . .	Harmony created from the interchange of diverse views
Conclusions that are popular with the group. . . . .	Conclusions that the group comes to see as necessary
A technique for deciding something in a meeting . . . . .	An overall culture within which decisions get made
The result of managing the group process so as to arrive at anticipated outcomes . . . . .	The result of facilitating the group process so as to allow for unanticipated outcomes
A process that leaves people irritated and exhausted by the struggle to reach agreement . . . . .	A process that leaves people enlivened and motivated for action



# Consensus Workshop Method Procedures

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Workshop ?

Sets the mood for full participation  
Clarifies the task  
Gives an overview of how the workshop will proceed

1. Clarify the workshop question and state the purpose or aim of the workshop
2. Briefly outline the process and time frame
3. Spend a few minutes discussing the workshop topic

[ 5-10 minutes]

**Workshop Question:** The question that the group will answer.

**Objective Purpose:** The rational objective of the workshop.

**Subjective Experience:** The mood and tone of the workshop.

## II. BRAINSTORM & PAIR

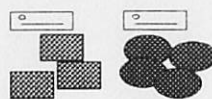


Rapidly elicits best initial thinking  
Involves all participants in contributing insights  
Catalyzes intuitions of group

4. Individually list answers to the workshop question
5. Share lists in groups of 2-5 people & select a minimum # of (5-10) ideas to write on cards
6. Collect 1-2 cards from each group and place on wall
7. Pair related ideas

[ 20-25 minutes]

## III. TAG & CLUSTER



Illuminates diverse points of view  
Discloses relationships between ideas or clusters  
Includes all the ideas

8. Get up second round of cards
9. Begin to tag pairs and clusters
10. Collect remaining cards and finalize clusters

[ 15-20 minutes]

## IV. DISCUSS & NAME

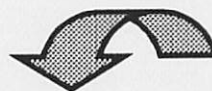


Facilitates dialogue to clarify the consensus of the group  
Affirms collective wisdom  
Expands individuals' perspectives

11. Talk through the largest cluster first
12. Give the cluster a 3-7 word name
13. Repeat for the remaining clusters

[15-20 minutes]

## V. REFLECTION



Affirms group consensus  
Discerns the level & implication of the consensus  
Facilitates individual ownership

14. Briefly evaluate and reflect on the title cards
15. Create a chart, visual, or image to hold the consensus
16. Discuss the next steps and implications

[10-15 minutes]



# Individual Workshop Method Procedures

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Workshop ?

Free mind from everything else  
Practice workshop method  
Plan to spend about 15-20 minutes

1. Repeat the workshop question & decide to use workshop process.
2. Briefly review the steps.
3. Say the workshop question in another way.

**Workshop Question:** What are the issues I face in \_\_\_\_\_?

**Objective Purpose:** Identify 3-5 issues that I need to deal with in my \_\_\_\_\_.

**Subjective Experience:** To experience my situation both rationally & intuitively.

## II. BRAINSTORM & PAIR

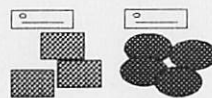


Write down everything that comes to mind  
Don't stop to reflect on any of your answers  
Use my right brain

4. Rapidly list everything that comes to mind using separate post-its for each thought.
5. Using your intuition add more issues, blocks, concerns until you have at least 15-20 post-its.
6. Review the post-its, looking for pairs. Ask yourself why you paired them.

[ 20-25 minutes ]

## III. TAG & CLUSTER



Notice the relationships  
Use intuition to gain insight into root causes  
Not discard any thoughts as not related to question

8. Review data & pairs and begin to develop clusters with similar underlying causes.
9. When you have clustered all your post-its, play a little with moving some of the post-its to another cluster and notice how that effects the cluster.

## IV. DISCUSS & NAME



Decide which post-its have a similar root cause  
Trust my intuition  
Affirm the wisdom that comes from within

10. Explore clusters for new clarity or insights they reveal to you.
11. Give each cluster a name. Distinguish title post-its with border, symbol, or color.
12. Repeat for the remaining clusters.

## V. REFLECTION



Affirm your insights  
Decide a few immediate next steps  
Figure out a way not forget wisdom

13. Briefly evaluate and reflect on your titles. Reword as new clarity emerges. Note new insights as they emerge.
14. Create a chart, visual, or image to capture your insights or resolve.
15. Note your next steps and reflect on implications.



# Sample Workshop Procedures

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Read the workshop question.
2. Ask for a few examples of what their "roles & responsibilities" have been.
3. Outline process and timeline:  
*"Today this process will take about an hour to 1 1/2 hrs. First we will get out our initial thinking, do some individual work, share it, and then reach a consensus - so that we'll all be acting more as a team as we go about our regional work."*

**Workshop Question:** *What are the roles & responsibilities of a regional coordinator for healthy communities?*

**Objective Purpose:** to describe the tasks required of the Healthy Community regional coordinators.

**Subjective Experience:** to get excited and motivated as they recognize the breadth & depth of their job.

## II. BRAINSTORM & PAIR

4. Individually list answers to the workshop question.
5. Share lists in groups of 2-5 ; assign a minimum # of ideas to write on cards (5-10).
6. *Send me the clearest idea from each group.* Read aloud while placing randomly on wall.
7. Pair related ideas.

## III. TAG & CLUSTER

8. *Send me your different ideas.* Continue to form pairs.
9. Begin to tag pairs and clusters with a symbol or one or two words.
10. Collect the remaining ideas and finalize clusters.

## IV. DISCUSS & NAME

11. Talk through largest cluster: *What role or responsibility are we talking about in this cluster? How can we state it in a way that will be inclusive of all our insights here?*
12. Ask someone to give the cluster a 5-7 word name that states the consensus of the group.
13. Repeat for remaining clusters.

## V. REFLECTION

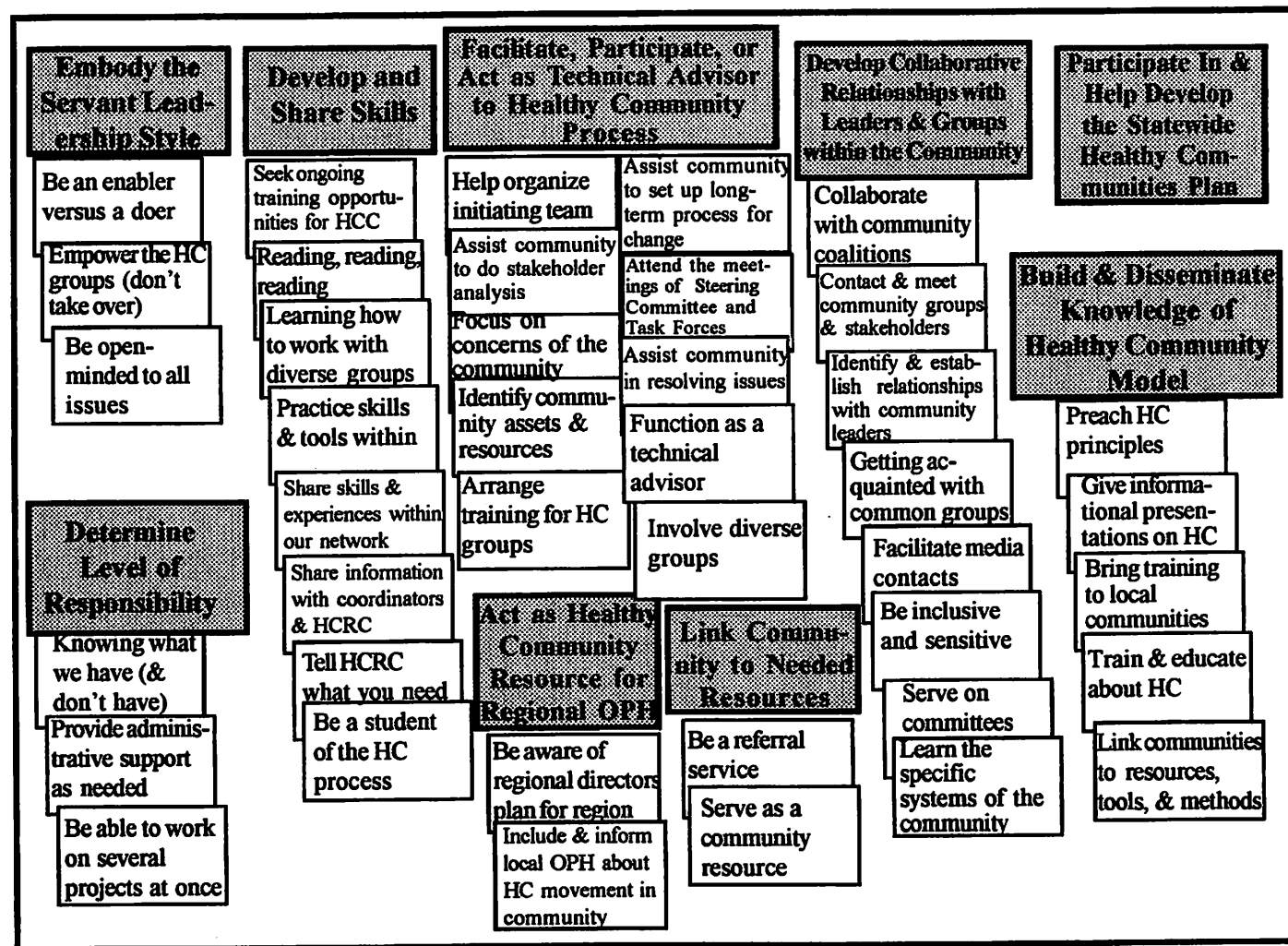
14. Prioritize roles & responsibilities in order of importance and impact.
15. Discuss the significance of the product:
  - 1) *Which one will be the easiest to fulfill?*
  - 2) *Why?*
  - 3) *Which one will be the most difficult?*
  - 4) *Why?*
  - 5) *What will be the best way for us to hold each other accountable?*
  - 6) *What additional training do we need?*
16. *In what form do we need to record this workshop?*



# Sample of a Workshop Board (after Step IV)

Notes

**What are the roles and responsibilities of Healthy Community Regional Coordinators?**





# The Consensus Workshop Method Framework

The focus and content of a workshop can be anything. The sequence of steps is of primary importance and does not change. It is built on a framework that follows the way the human mind works. The mind takes in objective sensory input, responds to the input, interprets the meaning or significance of the information and takes a relationship to it – a decision, a resolve, an action. The steps of the workshop follow this framework which allows the group to process the information together in an effective way from the initial brainstorming of data to the end product or decision.

## I. INTRODUCTION

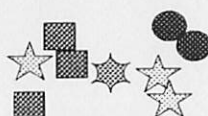
Clarifies focus & establishes the importance



Sets the mood for full participation  
Clarifies the task  
Gives an overview of how the workshop will proceed

## II. BRAINSTORM & PAIR

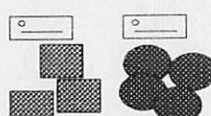
Elicits data from the group in response to the focus question



Rapidly elicits best initial thinking  
Involves all participants in contributing insights  
Catalyzes intuitions of group

## III. TAG & CLUSTER

Organizes brainstorm into clusters of related data



Illuminates diverse points of view  
Discloses relationships between ideas or clusters  
Includes all the ideas

## IV. DISCUSS & NAME

Names the cluster to include all insights held by the data



Facilitates dialogue to clarify the consensus of the group  
Affirms collective wisdom  
Expands individuals' perspectives

## V. REFLECTION

Examines the significance and implication of the consensus



Affirms group consensus  
Discerns the level & implications of the consensus  
Facilitates individual ownership of group consensus

OBJECTIVE LEVEL

RESPONSIVE LEVEL

INTERPRETIVE LEVEL

DEPTH LEVEL








# Consensus Workshop Method Practice

Notes

## TO PREPARE FOR YOUR WORKSHOP PRACTICE:

- Read through the procedures on Pages 51 through 55 that are appropriate to your assigned section.
- Highlight key words.
- Rewrite procedures in your own words on Worksheet (See example on Page 46)
- Visualize yourself walking to the front of the group and going through your key steps:
  - What will be your first words?
  - What materials will you need?
  - How much time will you take?

ASSIGNMENTS				
Workshop ?				
O.P.:		S.E.:		
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>  page 51	<b>II. BRAINSTORM &amp; PAIR</b>  page 52	<b>III. TAG &amp; CLUSTER</b>  page 53	<b>IV. DISCUSS &amp; NAME</b>  page 54	<b>V. REFLECTION</b>  page 55



# Preparing to Facilitate a Consensus Workshop

Notes

In preparing to lead a workshop, the facilitator gets clear about the purpose and the objectives of the workshop. Why are we doing this workshop? What does the group need to know or decide? What product will the workshop produce? What do I want the group to experience in doing this? Then the facilitator crafts the focus question of the workshop from which the brainstorm data will flow. Consider the difference in the type of responses you would get with these two different questions: (1) *What's wrong with our present production process?* or (2) *How can we increase production to full capacity?*

**The Workshop Question** is a question to which the workshop content and product are a response. It is the question that the group will answer.

**The Objective Purpose** is the rational objective of the workshop. It is what the group needs to:

- know
- understand
- plan or produce
- do or decide on

**The Subjective Experience** is the mood and tone of the workshop. It is:

- what the group needs to experience  
e.g. excitement, soberness, celebration
- what you'd like to happen in the group  
e.g. new or deepened insights,  
breakthroughs, discovery

Consider the following Workshop Questions. What would be your Objective Purpose and Subjective Experience for each Workshop Question?

*What are the elements of an effective leave policy?*

*What do we see going on in three years?*

*What do we want to accomplish in the coming year?*

*What can we do to improve our inter-office communications?*

*What steps should we take to ensure a successful implementation of this new policy?*

*What are the blocks to a positive public image for our organization?*

*What are the roadblocks to successfully reaching our targeted goals?*



# Tips for an Effective Workshop

Notes

## Workshop ?

## I. INTRODUCTION

### INTENTS:

- set the mood for full participation
- clarify the task
- give an overview of how the workshop will proceed

## STEPS

### Briefly:

1. Clarify the workshop question and state the purpose or aim of the workshop.
2. Outline the process and timing.
3. Spend a few minutes letting the group talk about the topic.

5-10 minutes

based on a serious, but not highly contentious topic and a group of 15-20 people.

## PROCEDURAL TIPS

Write brainstorm question large on a flip chart sheet and post at the front of the room. Make sure the question is clear. Allow them to modify it as needed.

Explain how the process will work: work individually in silence, share in small groups, and, using small group's work, as a whole group develop the consensus around the question.

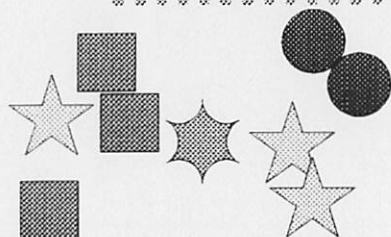
Give a clear understanding of the time available (45 min. to 3 hours, depending on size of group and complexity of the question. Figure this out with the client ahead of time, so you have enough time devoted to the topic to adequately arrive at the needed consensus.

Ask one or more warm-up questions to get the group thinking about the topic: for example, for a brainstorm question like "What are the elements of an effective team?", ask What is the first team you remember? What team(s) are you a part of now? What works well in your teams? What doesn't work? Then get a couple of sample answers to the brainstorm question to seed their individual thinking.

## CONSENSUS:

This step sets conditions for a group consensus when the group agrees to use the workshop process to answer the question.





## II. BRAINSTORM & PAIR

### INTENTS:

- rapidly elicit best initial thinking from each individual
- involve all participants in contributing insights
- catalyze intuition about relationships

### STEPS

4. Individually list answers to the workshop question.
5. Share lists in groups of 2-5 ; assign a minimum # of ideas to write on cards (5-10).
6. Collect 1 or 2 cards from each group, read aloud & place randomly on wall.
7. Pair related ideas.  
20-25 minutes

### PROCEDURAL TIPS

Give individuals time to do their own thinking. Ask for silence. Have individuals note the ideas that are most important to them.

In mini-teams of 2-5 people, ask them to quickly read their lists (with no long explanations).

Have them choose their best answers to the brainstorm question and put them on cards. You will need about 45 cards for the workshop. Divide 45 by the number of mini-teams to get the number of ideas each team needs to put on cards.

Put up model of how to write on cards:

WRITE  
BIG

3 TO 5  
WORDS

ONE IDEA  
PER CARD

sample of  
card content

Ask each mini-team to send up their clearest cards.

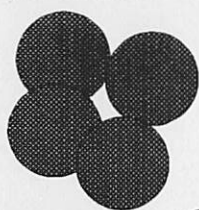
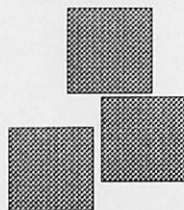
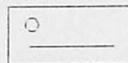
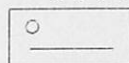
Read each card and place it randomly on the wall, spreading them out.

- Accept & acknowledge all responses equally
- Indicate to the group that there are no wrong answers
- Answer questions of clarity only, let the person or group whose idea it was answer
- Judgmental or 'editorial' comments from your or others will cut off the participation of many people
- If you don't quite understand what the person meant, ASK rather than trying to interpret.

Intuitively form 4 to 6 pairs—you are looking for new relationships, not just cards with the same word on them. Ask what ties them together (similar intent, action, accomplishment...). You are pushing the group's intuition and imagination.

**CONSENSUS:** This step begins to reveal a common ground as the group consents to honor and treat each idea with equal merit.





### III. TAG & CLUSTER

#### INTENTS:

- disclose relationships between ideas or clusters
- illuminate points of agreement and/or disagreement
- include all the ideas and discern if more data is needed

#### STEPS

8. Get up a second round of cards
9. Begin to tag pairs & clusters
10. Collect the remaining cards and finalize the clusters.

15-20 minutes

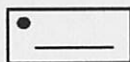
#### PROCEDURAL TIPS

Ask for a round of cards with different ideas.

Form any new pairs and begin to tag as the group adds to a pair.

Notes about tagging:

~ a tag is a simple label (1-2 words) with a symbol or letter in the corner to help with organizing the ideas



~ a tag is not the title or name of the cluster

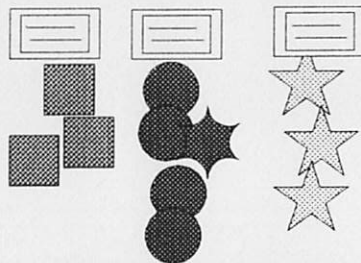
~ to get the tag, keep asking of the pair or cluster, "What is this cluster about?" or "What is the arena?" or "What holds these together?"

Ask for cards that are similar to the tagged clusters. Have mini-teams put the symbol or letter of the tag on the card that goes in that cluster. Collect these, read them as you add them. Ask for the rest of the cards and ask where they go (into a tagged cluster or to begin a new cluster). When there is disagreement, ask for the reason a card needs to stay or be moved.

When all non-duplicate cards are up, ask individuals to take a last look at their original brainstorm list and see if there is an idea important to them that is not yet on the wall. Add these.

**CONSENSUS:** This step begins to broaden each individual's perspective as the group begins to see the relationships between the ideas.





## IV. DISCUSS & NAME

### INTENTS:

- facilitate depth dialogue to clarify the consensus of the group
- expand individuals' initial perspectives
- affirm the collective wisdom

### STEPS

11. Talk through the largest cluster first.
12. Give the cluster a 5-7 word title.
13. Repeat for the remaining clusters

20 minutes

### PROCEDURAL TIPS

This step enables a group to reach a consensus about the answer to the original brainstorm question based on collective wisdom. To name (or give a title to) a cluster of cards, read aloud all the cards. Choose the largest cluster first.

Explain that we're looking for our collective wisdom about \_\_\_\_\_ (tag).

Ask questions like:

- What 5-7 words will be most descriptive of all the cards in this cluster?
- What title will be inclusive of all the insights?

Help the group build on previous responses by combining insights.

Continue to return to the brainstorm question, making sure each cluster's name answers the question.

Continue to name each cluster in turn.

To distinguish title cards from idea cards, border the title cards, use a different color paper or marker, or a larger sheet (or combine two or more of these suggestions).

**CONSENSUS:** This is the step where consensus is reached as the group discusses and decides on the name for each cluster.





## V. REFLECTION

### INTENTS:

- affirm & own the consensus
- discern the level and implications of the consensus
- gain clarity on immediate next steps

### STEPS

14. Discuss the significance of the consensus.
15. Create a chart or visual image to hold the consensus. (optional)
16. Discuss the next steps and/or implications of the consensus.

20 minutes

### PROCEDURAL TIPS

Sample discussion: Let's step back from our work for a minute.

O - Let me read the titles of our clusters (Read each title.)

R - Where are you most excited or intrigued?

Where are you uneasy or feeling uncomfortable?

I - What breakthroughs or new insights did we have?

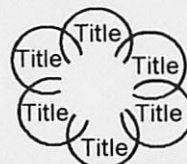
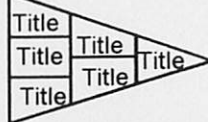
Has anything been left out? If so what?

What has occurred within yourself during this workshop?

D - So, now where are we?

Optional: Teams can write statements that hold insights of each cluster and/or create a visual image that reflects how clusters relate to each other. A chart can quickly and easily hold the total information in front of the whole group. In creating the chart, relationships between the clusters can be discussed, e.g. largest issue, key new action, most catalytic...

Sample charts:



End with: What are our practical next steps? Who is responsible for them? Implications of work?

### CONSENSUS:

In this step the consensus is confirmed by the group as individuals personally take ownership of the collective decisions of the group.



# Determining the Form of the Cluster Name

OBJECTIVE PURPOSE	SAMPLE WORKSHOP QUESTION	CLUSTER BY:	SUGGESTED FORM OF NAME
1. Shared vision of a healthy community	<i>What are the characteristics of a healthy community?</i>	Similar characteristics	Juicy adjective noun e.g. LIVELY COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY
2. Outline of a report	<i>What are all the pieces of information we want to include in this report?</i>	Information that would go into the same chapter	Adjective noun, e.g. HISTORICAL INFLUENCE
3. Task force action plan for a successful conference	<i>What do we have to do to make our conference really successful?</i>	Actions that can be done by the same group	Task force name, e.g. REGISTRATIONS
4. Action plan to do a project	<i>What are the things we need to do to accomplish this project?</i>	Actions that can be done together	Gerund, article, noun e.g. CLEANING THE GROUNDS
5. List of shared values to consider when buying a house	<i>What values do we hold in buying a new house?</i>	Similiar values	4-7 word phrase e.g. EASY ACCESS TO OUTDOORS
6. List of shared elements to include in holiday plans	<i>What are the elements of a successful holiday?</i>	Similiar components	Adjective noun e.g. QUIET TIME
7. Values for dealing with "x"	<i>What are the things we have to consider in approaching "x"?</i>	Similiar considerations	Descriptive phrase e.g. PERSONAL FEELINGS OF OTHERS
8. Description of qualities to work toward as a team	<i>What are the qualities of a high performance work team?</i>	Similiar qualities	Juicy metaphor e.g. PROFOUND RESPECT OF TEAMMATES
9. Definition of "x"	<i>What are the questions we have regarding this topic?</i>	Similiar underlying questions	Simple question e.g. HOW SECURE ARE OUR JOBS?
10. Underlying obstacles that block us	<i>What blocks are we runing into?</i>	Underlying root causes	Descriptive phrase e.g. UNDEVELOPED PERSONAL CAPACITY
11. Strategies	<i>What can we do to deal with these obstacles?</i>	Actions with a similiar intent	Gerund, adjective, noun e.g. STARTING NEW BUSINESSES
12. Improvement plan	<i>What are the things we could do to improve our team's performance?</i>	Similiar actions	Verb, adjective, object e.g. HOLD REGULAR MEETINGS

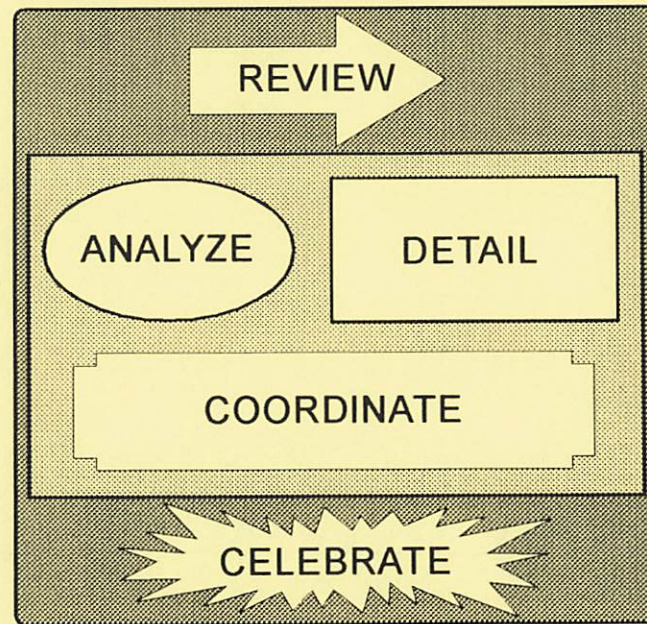


# Consensus Workshop Worksheet

<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>Workshop Question:</b>			<b>V. REFLECTION</b>
	<b>Objective Purpose:</b>	<b>Subjective Experience:</b>		
	<b>II. BRAINSTORM &amp; PAIR</b>	<b>III. TAG &amp; CLUSTER</b>	<b>IV. DISCUSS &amp; NAME</b>	



# ***Action Planning Process***



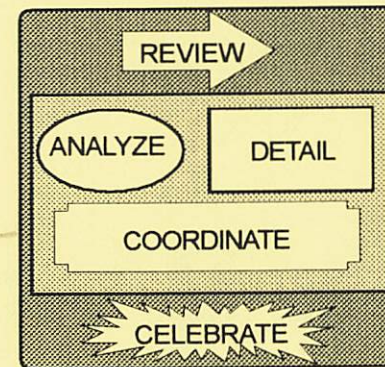


# Introduction to the Action Planning Process

Notes

Have you ever been asked or volunteered to take responsibility for a specific project or event and had difficulty getting others to take responsibility for doing parts of the task? Or have you ever been a part of a committee or task force that was given responsibility to plan an event or do a project where you never quite figured out just what part of the task you were really responsible for, what others on the committee were doing (or suppose to do), or how what you were doing would make a difference? The Action Planning Process was designed to allow all those responsible for implementing an event or project to plan together how to accomplish the task.

The ACTION PLANNING PROCESS is a method for short-term planning of an event or project that has already been agreed or consensed on. This facilitation process clarifies and delineates the task, aligns the creativity, capabilities, interests, and resources of the group, decides the necessary actions, roles, and responsibilities, builds group trust, support, enthusiasm, and consensus, creates an implementation timeline to accomplish the task, and coordinates actions and assignments. It uses both the *Guided Dialogue* and the *Consensus Workshop Methods*.



## When to use the Action Planning Process

The uses for the *Action Planning Process* include virtually any form of short-term planning for projects, campaigns, programs or events. Examples include:

- When members of an Environmental Coalition have decided to collect Christmas trees to use to build up barrier islands protecting the coast from flooding
- When a group of business leaders have decided that they will hold a leadership seminar to increase economic development.
- When the Board of Directors for an organization have decided to sponsor and host a conference.
- When parents of a neighborhood public school have decided to hold a Community Fair to raise money for the school.
- When any group is responsible for special events such as weddings, retirements, anniversaries, birthdays, or high school, college, or family reunions.



# Benefits of Participatory Planning

Notes

What do organizations gain from the use of participatory planning and problem-solving? I see five benefits, beginning with the most concrete and immediate, but also including some that are longer term enhancers of productivity and effectiveness.

**1. The specific plans themselves - strategies, solutions, action plans.** A world of rapid change requires constant planning and replanning, as circumstances change, as new competitors burst on the scene, as events require mid-course correction. So organizations need more planning and problem-solving today; they cannot run on automatic pilot. Thus, bringing together those with expertise and a stake in an issue is the fastest way to tackle problems, address opportunities, and define new directions.

**2. Greater commitment - and ability - to implement decisions and strategies.** When people participate in a planning process, they are certainly more likely to be committed to the plans, because they have talked them through, because the plans reflect their own thinking, and because the group has developed consensus. This is just common sense - although it did take scores of careful social science studies to convince some managers of this obvious truth. But organizations also find their own people better equipped to carry out the plans when they participate in shaping them because they are more knowledgeable and informed. They better understand the needs, the goals, and where their own responsibilities fit in with those of others.

**3. More innovation - a larger portfolio of ideas.** Involvement of more people in the planning process, especially a mixture of people with different perspectives, generates new insights into problems and encourages a fresh look at opportunities. The cross-fertilization from a group bringing diverse backgrounds to a planning task can sometimes result in breakthrough strategies. I call this "Kaleidoscope thinking" - the ability to challenge traditional assumptions and define new patterns and possibilities.

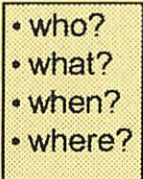
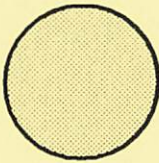
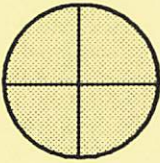
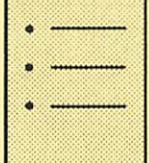
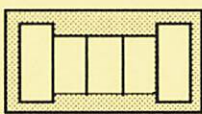
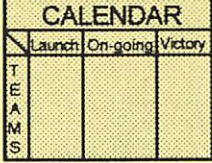
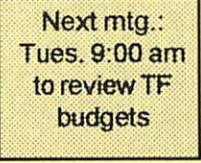


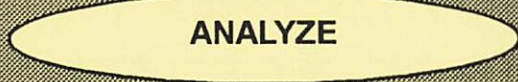
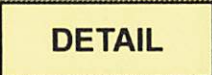
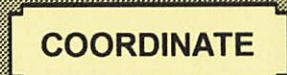

**4. A common framework for decision-making, communication, planning, and problem-solving.** The team-building effects of participation extend well beyond the "high" of a successful planning session. A group with a common vocabulary and methodology for working together - e.g., a sense of how to conduct a meeting - does not have to argue over procedure but can go right to work. Thus, meetings become more productive, and teamwork is enhanced.

**5. Encouragement of initiative and responsibility.** This is the least tangible and longest-term benefit, and perhaps the most important. People who have been involved in participative planning are more likely to feel a sense of ownership for their part of the organization. They are more likely to take action when they see a problem or an opportunity, rather than assume it's someone else's responsibility.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Foreword from *Winning Through Participation*, Laura Spencer, Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1989



# Action Planning Process Overview

OPENING CONSENSUS	VISIONING PROCESS			PLANNING PROCESS	ORCHESTRATING PROCESS		FINAL CONSENSUS
	VICTORY	CURRENT REALITY	COMMITMENT		TASK FORCE CALENDARS	COORDINATION & COSTS	
<b>Step I.</b> 	<b>Step II.</b> 	<b>Step III.</b> 	<b>Step IV.</b> 	<b>Step V.</b> 	<b>Step VI.</b> 	<b>Step VII.</b> 	<b>Step VIII.</b> 
Set the context. Review the background information and the decisions already made. Outline the Time & Process	Ask group to imagine the day after completion. What do you see/feel/hear? Put responses inside a large circle drawn on flip chart paper.	List the strengths and weaknesses. Talk through potential benefits and dangers that would result from succeeding with this action plan. Make notes on a flip chart and post.	Articulate a clear, compelling, and concise statement that everyone agrees to, then write on a flip chart and post.	Do a Consensus Workshop that brainstorms actions that will accomplish the task. Cluster actions by those that should be done by the same team or subgroup.	Each subgroup plans their activities, puts their actions on cards, places cards on a large calendar and then reports to the whole group.	Group adjusts the calendar to reflect the coordination required among the subgroups, estimates the overall costs, and decides on follow-through mechanisms.	Facilitate a celebrative Guided Dialogue to confirm the group resolve, create a catchy title, campaign name, or visual image of the task and decide next steps.
 <b>REVIEW</b>	 <b>ANALYZE</b>			 <b>DETAIL</b>	 <b>COORDINATE</b>		 <b>CELEBRATE</b>
10-20 minutes	30-60 minutes			30-60 minutes	45-60 minutes		20-30 minutes



# Action Planning Procedures

Name of the Activity or Event:

## I. OPENING CONSENSUS

- 1) OPEN WITH: Before creating our Action Plan to... (create a celebration, organize a campaign, project, or event... etc.), we need to look at our present consensus (the starting point) and any background information we have.
- 2) REVIEW what has already been decided and list on a sheet of flip chart paper:
  - Who?
  - What?
  - When?
  - Why?
  - How?
  - Where?
- 3) BRIEFLY OUTLINE the time and process for this workshop.

## Objective Purpose:

To build the big picture, assess the current & projected situation, decide necessary actions & develop a timeline for completing the plan.

## Subjective Experience:

To create motivation and consensus to enable the group to complete a successful event or project.

## VISIONING PROCESS

### II. VICTORY

Ask group to imagine the day after completion. What do you see/feel/hear? Put responses inside a large circle drawn on a flip chart.

### III. CURRENT REALITY

List strengths and weaknesses of the group. Talk through potential benefits and dangers that would result from succeeding with this action plan. Make notes on a flip chart & post.

### IV. COMMITMENT

Quickly review the victory & current reality and briefly discuss what the current reality reveals. Ask for and bullet point key items of the commitment. Be as clear, compelling, and concise as possible. If appropriate, write a statement that summarizes the commitment at this point. Write final responses on a new flip chart page.

## V. PLANNING PROCESS

1) BRAINSTORM THE DETAILED ACTIONS  
Individuals brainstorm list of actions (big, small, wild, necessary, etc.). Write each action on a card. Get at least two cards from each team member and place on board or wall.

2) DISCERN THE WORK GROUPS  
Group the actions into several clusters according to those which need to be done by same group or committee or at the same time. Tag the clusters. After all the cards are up, ask for any further actions that might be missing.

3) ORGANIZE FORCES  
Have each member of the group self-select which task force to work in. If the group is small, some clusters may be grouped and given to the same subgroup, task force, or committee.

ORCHESTRATING PROCESS  
**VI. TASK FORCE WORK ON THE CALENDAR**  
Subgroups or task forces finalize the actions to achieve their goal and name their group. You set up the calendar wall. Divide horizontally into the number of action clusters.

## VII. COORDINATION AND CALENDAR CONSENSUS

1) TASK FORCE REPORTS & PLENARY  
Task forces put their cards up sequentially and report to group. Integrate and coordinate activities across task forces.

2) LEADERSHIP & COST  
Agree on overall coordinator and sub-groups leaders. Estimate the overall cost. [Subgroups will need to build their actual budgets within the overall budget.]

## VIII. FINAL CONSENSUS

- 1) GUIDED DIALOGUE
  - What stands out for you from our time together?
  - What are you looking forward to? Dreading?
  - Any breakthroughs? Surprises? Insights?
  - What will be the significance of accomplishing these actions?
  - So what exactly have we just done? What does it mean?
- 2) NEXT STEPS  
What are our next steps? What is our follow-up mechanism? How shall we document our work? When do we meet again?
- 3) CELEBRATE!  
Create a catchy title, campaign name, song, or visual image of the task ahead. Be ready to toast the victory, or conclude with snacks or a meal, break out the balloons, or give the group a round of applause or a "pat on the back."



# Tips for Effective Action Planning

Notes

## Opening Consensus

REVIEW

### INTENTS:

- set the mood for full participation
- clarify the task
- give an overview of how the workshop will proceed
- remind participants of prior decision or consensus

### STEP I

- 1) Introduce workshop activity.
- 2) Review background and decisions that have been made previously.
- 3) Briefly outline the time frame for this meeting and the 8 steps of the action planning process.

10-30 minutes

### PROCEDURAL TIPS

Remind group of their prior decision to do the project, event, etc. Then review and list any basic decisions previously made on a flip chart - who, what, when, etc.

Discuss the parameters of the project so that everyone understands exactly what the project is, the anticipated time frame for the project and who the stakeholders and/or participants will be.

Remind group of the importance of doing this, the purpose, and the linkage to other work of the organization, etc. Convey excitement about doing the project with your voice and energy.

Write the 8 major steps of the process on a flip chart and explain them, noting how the Action Planning Process differs from other planning process. (See Facilitator Guidelines on Page 59.) Emphasize that consensus will be reached during Steps IV, VII & VIII.



## Visioning Process

### INTENTS:

- create images of success developing excitement about the project
- acknowledge awareness of current reality surrounding the situation
- develop consensus on the scope and focus of the project
- get clarity on the group's commitment

### ANALYZE

## STEP II VICTORY

Create a Victory Circle filled with images of successful completion.

10-20 minutes

## PROCEDURAL TIPS

Draw large Victory Circle on flip chart paper before workshop begins.

The Victory Circle is not about making decisions on the project, but seeding the imagination of the group, getting out beyond typical thinking of what is possible. You are creating a palette of possibilities, not making decisions. Ask questions such as What did you see? Feel? Hear? Who was involved? What was going on? What was surprising?

You may go around the group once, getting an image from each person. Use several different color markers to write in ideas. You are not planning here, but creating an exciting picture of potential. Write large so

that the circle is filled after about two items from each person, depending on the size of the group.

Your objective is to give the group a sense of the final outcome in a richness of detail that will begin to bring it alive in their imaginations.

This piece may be relatively clear already and may move rapidly. Or it may take a little time for people to get their minds around the project and become excited with its possibilities. Depending on the group, you may want to have them step into the future and visualize what the final product looks like, as well as what was involved in getting there. This is usually a high energy section.



## Visioning Process, continued

### ANALYZE

#### INTENTS:

- create images of success and develop excitement about doing the project
- **acknowledge awareness of current reality surrounding the situation**
- develop consensus on the scope and focus of the project
- get clarity on the group's commitment

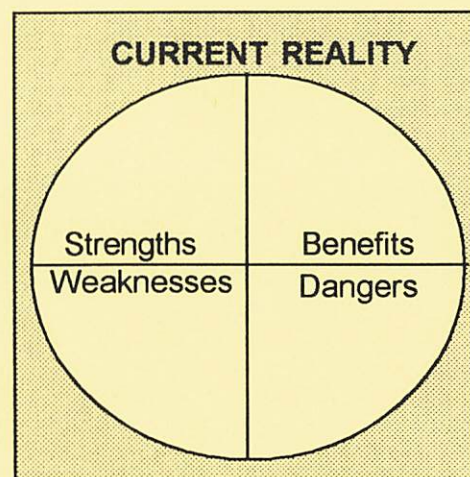
## STEP III

### CURRENT REALITY

Describe the current reality surrounding the situation from four different perspectives.

10-20 minutes

## PROCEDURAL TIPS



Current Reality is divided into 4 quadrants. List the **Strengths** that will lead to the victory, the **Weaknesses** that threaten the accomplishment of the victory, potential **Benefits** of pursuing this course of action, and potential **Dangers** of carrying out the task. Note that Strengths and Weaknesses are used to describe the group who is responsible for implementation. The Benefits and Dangers are assuming the success of the project. Use a different color marker to fill in each section. Keep the pace moving—when ideas stop coming, move to the next quadrant.

Ask people to relax and listen as you read back the information, letting it "wash over" them. Ask the group to listen for what the current reality reveals about their situation as you read aloud all items from the two circles.



## Visioning Process

### DESIGN

#### INTENTS:

- create images of success and develop excitement about doing the project
- acknowledge awareness of current reality surrounding the situation
- **develop consensus on the scope and focus of the project**
- **get clarity on the group's commitment**

### STEP IV COMMITMENT

Clarify the scope of the project and the level of commitment to doing the project.

10-20 minutes

### PROCEDURAL TIPS

#### COMMITMENT

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This step is about reaching or forming a consensus. The level of consensus determines the level of commitment, ownership, and enthusiasm for implementing the plan.

You might start with something like, "Now let's be real clear on what we are committed to."

Here, you are still not planning, but developing the intent, general scope and focus of the project that you will be planning in a moment or two. It is important to write this on a flip chart as clearly and concisely as possible.

**Do NOT move forward until this step is completed.** Be sure that the group has reached consensus at this point.

If this does not come easily, have each person, or in pairs, write a one-sentence statement summarizing the consensus at this point. Read aloud and post. Then ask the group which phrases best hold the consensus for the whole group. Write these phrases as bullet points on a flip or include them in a statement.



DETAIL

## Planning Process

### INTENTS:

- get out as many innovative and creative ideas as possible
- decide which actions should be done by the same team
- get each individual excited about their specific involvement

## STEP V

- 1) Brainstorm detailed actions that will accomplish the task.
- 2) Discern work groups by clustering the actions by function or actions that would be done together by same people.
- 3) Divide into self-selected subgroups or working groups to finalize actions.

30-60 minutes

## PROCEDURAL TIPS

Follow the consensus workshop process. Individually or in pairs, write actions on cards. Be sure the group understands that you are not looking for items that say "form a committee", but for all the actions any committees would have to accomplish in order to complete the project. Go round and get one or two cards from each person or pair. Ask for all different action items to be sent up and then ask if there are any actions that were not written down that are crucial to accomplishing the task.

It is important to allow the action clusters to become the basis of working groups rather than using predetermined committees. Your organizing factor is actions that would be done by the same subgroup or task force. This step goes

quickly. There's no need to spend a lot of time naming the cluster because each subgroup or task force will give themselves a name later.

Divide into sub-groups to work on more detailed planning in each task arena. Initially, let individuals self-select which task arena they want to work on. This allows leadership to emerge through interest in specific tasks and builds in ownership. If group size is very unbalanced, ask group about adjusting. If one task arena has no volunteers, ask if this arena is crucial to the success of the project. Possibly it could be merged with another closely related task, e.g. Public Relations and Invitations. Check with the whole group to see if the needed expertise is included in each task group.



## Orchestrating Process

### COORDINATE

#### INTENTS:

- create a calendar of actions that will accomplish the victory
- coordinate major aspects of the project
- develop individual ownership and motivation for the entire project

### STEP VI

#### TASK FORCE CALENDARS

If you've not yet taken a break, let groups take one now!

Subgroups decide needed steps for implementing their task arena, deciding who, what, when, etc.

Subgroups report their plans to the whole group.

30-45 minutes  
including 15 min.  
break

### PROCEDURAL TIPS

Subgroups or task forces meet to decide the needed actions for success in their arena, incorporating the cards from the group workshop and adding others to create sequential steps to successful completion. Each action step is on a separate card with date indicated. The initial action step and the final action step are written on bordered cards or on a different color card.

While task forces work, put the calendar framework on front wall, creating a row for each task arena. Dates (months and/or weeks) go across the top. Ask task forces to place cards on the calendar when they have finished their planning.

As each group reports, create a mood of celebration. One way to do this is to acknowledge each subgroup's work with a rousing round of applause.

#### PROJECT CALENDAR

Teams	Launch	On-going	Victory
-------	--------	----------	---------



## Orchestrating Process

### COORDINATE

#### INTENTS:

- create a calendar of actions that will accomplish the victory
- **coordinate major aspects of the project**
- **develop individual ownership and motivation for the project**

### STEP VII COORDINATION & COSTS

- 1) Group listens to subgroup's reports and consenses on adjustments.
- 2) Group decides on details of coordination and budget for the project.

15-30 minutes

### PROCEDURAL TIPS

Coordinate the task force reports using questions like:

- What events on the timeline call for a second look at the timing?
- Do our victories reflect our commitment?
- Are initial budget projections calling for adjustments?
- How will we coordinate our activities? Will we have an overall coordinator?
- Will representatives from each team meet? If so, how often?
- When will the whole group need to meet again?



## Final Consensus

### INTENTS:

- Reconfirm consensus and/or decisions
- Specify next steps
- Affirm and celebrate the work

**CELEBRATE**

### STEP VIII

- 1) Facilitate a brief Guided Dialogue.
- 2) Prepare the group to move to next steps.
- 3) Create a catchy title, campaign name, song, or visual image to celebrate the group's accomplishment.

20-30 minutes

### PROCEDURAL TIPS

Be sure to plan enough time to do this step thoroughly, for it confirms the group's consensus and enlivens the spirit of the group.

Facilitate a brief Guided Dialogue to allow the group to step back from their planning and reflect on their work and the implications for the future.

- What stands out for you from our time together?
- What are you looking forward to? Dreading?
- Any breakthroughs? Surprises?
- What will be the significance of accomplishing these actions?
- So what exactly have we just done? What does it mean?

Make sure everyone has agreed on the next steps and schedule for future meetings.

It is very important that the entire action plan is documented and that each member gets a copy of it shortly after the close of the planning session (not more than a week later). The final document gives everyone the big picture, and reminds individuals of what they have personally committed to. As one colleague has said, "No action step is real until it is written in someone's appointment book!"

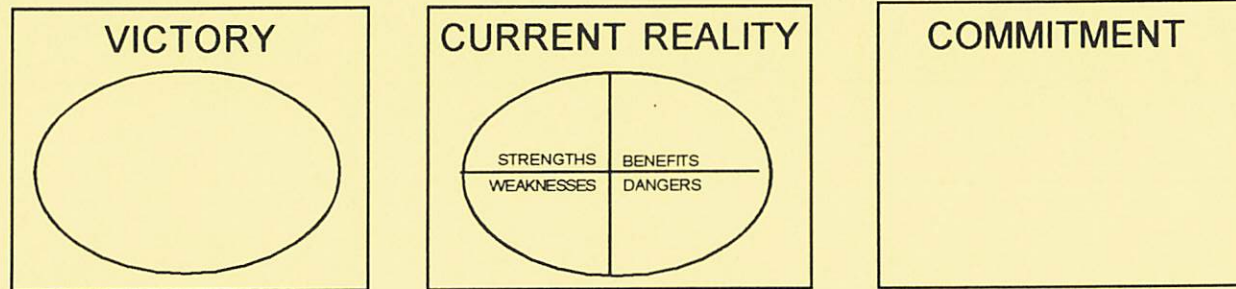
The creation of a slogan, a campaign title, or visual image to capture the spirit of the group builds motivation and commitment.



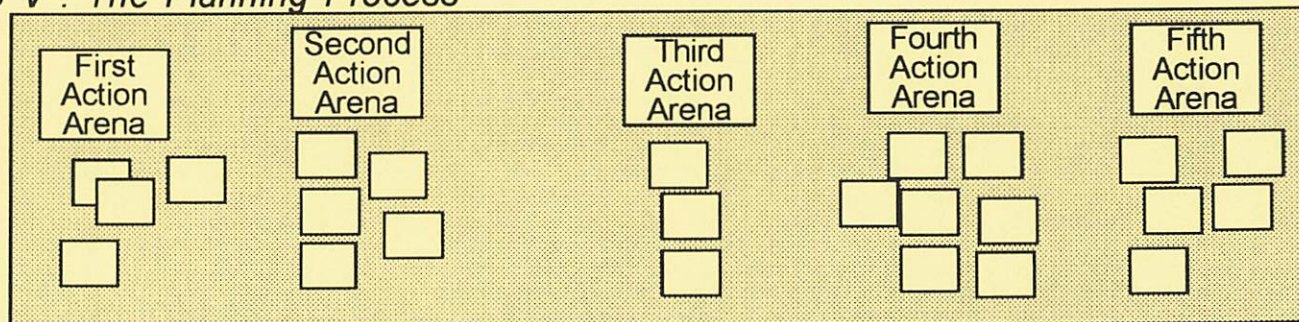
# Front Wall during Action Planning Process

Notes

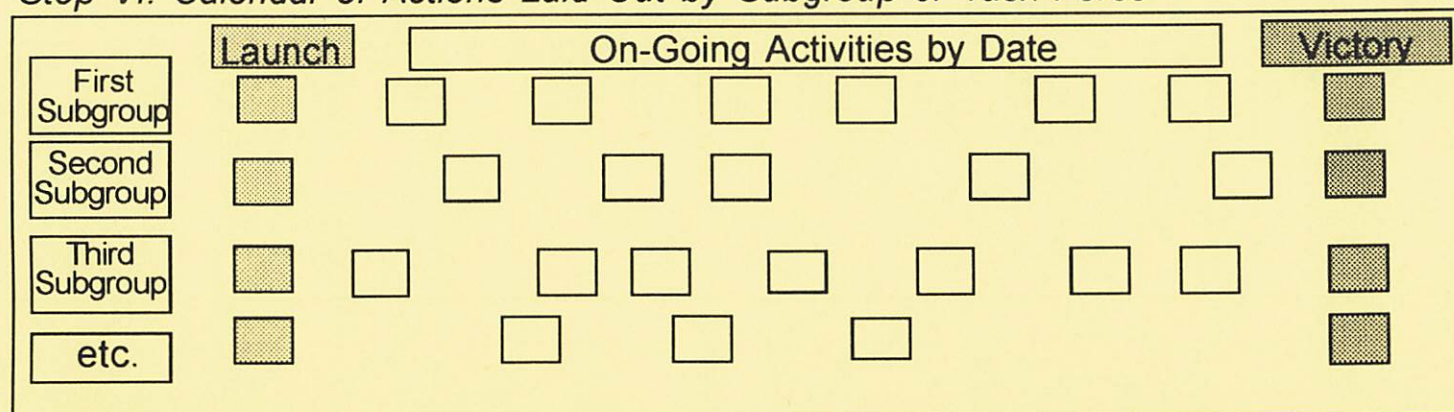
## Steps II - IV: The Visioning Process



## Step V : The Planning Process



## Step VI: Calendar of Actions Laid Out by Subgroup or Task Force





# Action Planning Worksheet

OPENING CONSENSUS	Project or Event:			FINAL CONSENSUS
	Objective Purpose:	Subjective Experience:		
	VISIONING PROCESS	PLANNING PROCESS	ORCHESTRATING PROCESS	



# Guidelines for Facilitating Action Planning

Notes

- 1. Rehearse the process frequently throughout the planning to ensure that the group understands the process.** Since many of the steps in the action planning process are done in a different order than participants may be accustomed to, it is helpful to describe the process at regular intervals noting things like:
  - The action planning process begins with the “end” by brainstorming the group’s image of a “perfect” ending, i.e., in describing the victory, start with the end in mind.
  - As you work in subgroups, also begin planning with the “victory” or final outcome.
  - When developing the subgroups or task forces, start with a cluster of actions that should be done by the same people rather than starting with named work groups or committees and then giving them specific tasks to do.
  - All answers are received equally. Responses during brainstorming may appear contradictory, but are listed without attempting to reconcile them.
- 2. Commitment is about reaching or forming a consensus.** Step IV, the Commitment Step, is the time to agree on the broad scope and outcome, not on the specific details of implementation. Step VII, the Coordination Step, is the time to agree on the details of the action plan. The strength of the consensus at that point will determine the levels of commitment, ownership, and enthusiasm that exist in the team for implementing the plan. Having individuals self select their subgroup or task force helps link individual commitment to specific tasks and strengthens group ownership.
- 3. This process allows for new leadership to emerge.** Project planning often begins by assigning a project leader and then committee leaders. They are then expected to decide and either do or get others to do the tasks. The Action Planning Process begins with the tasks and then asks the question of what kind of leadership is needed. This frequently results in the emergence of new leadership with interest in the specific tasks.



# Tracking Implementation

Notes

## BUILD AND SUSTAIN MOMENTUM

- Establish a rhythm of planning, accomplishments, and celebration.
- Plan an early success.
- Keep the purpose before the team.

## KEEP EVERYONE INFORMED

- Report regularly on progress.
- Keep wall calendar updated and posted. Use as decor.
- Keep all informed of meetings.

## MEET REGULARLY TO UPDATE PLAN

- Which actions were initiated last week?
- What were the accomplishments of the last 7 days?
- What have you learned?
- Were there any breakthroughs? If so what?
- Where are you blocked?
- Where do we need to push next week?

## MOTIVATE THE TEAM

- Acknowledge all the little accomplishments and efforts.
- See that everyone has an assignment or task.
- Use failures as learning opportunities.



# ***Appendix***



# Understanding Why the Process Isn't Working

The following table was adapted from *The Art of Focused Conversation*, R. Brian Stanfield, Gen. Ed., The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs, 1997, Pages 45-48. It expands on the previous hints and pointers, focusing specifically on commonly reported experiences among facilitative leadership. For more specific help, please call one of the trainers of your training seminar or one of the ICA offices listed on the last page of this manual.

DIFFICULTIES	POSSIBLE REASONS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
1. Group Isn't Focusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaotic or inhospitable setting.</li> <li>• Have not actually gotten the group's attention.</li> <li>• Context or reason for the gathering is not clearly understood.</li> <li>• Topic not relevant to group</li> </ul>	<p>Rearrange space to ensure a quiet setting where participants are seated so they can see each other.</p> <p>Plan an informal time when people are gathering, but limit it. Respectfully call for the group's attention to begin the conversation or workshop. Start on time to encourage taking each other seriously.</p> <p>In your opening comments, say enough about the purpose of the meeting and the method so the group understands and feels comfortable and ready to participate.</p> <p>Consult more than one person in the planning stage to get a better idea of what the group needs and expects.</p>
2. Group Doesn't Respond to Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak rapport with the faciitator or the group distrusts the facilitator.</li> </ul>	<p>Speak with warmth and an honoring style. Look people in the eye and really listen to them. Explain at the beginning, that as a facilitator, you are there to elicit the group's best thinking and wisdom, not to present them with answers or information.</p> <p>It is often helpful to begin with a brief conversation where you ask each person their name and what they want from this gathering; then ask them what would be most helpful for tfor you to do for the whole group.</p>



# Understanding Why the Process Isn't Working, *continued*

DIFFICULTIES	POSSIBLE REASONS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
<b>3. Group Gives You "Wrong Answers"</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have a hidden agenda or you believe there are "right answers" to the question.</li> </ul>	<p>Remind yourself that facilitative leadership requires that you elicit the group's wisdom and that there are no "wrong answers."</p> <p>However, if there are in fact "right answers" that need to come forth, stop asking questions and get permission to make a presentation.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions are not in the right order.</li> </ul>	<p>Check the level of questions. Say, "Hang on a minute. Let me ask this first," and substitute another question.</p> <p>Rephrase the question more clearly to focus the level of the answers.</p>
<b>4. Group Isn't Responding With Real Answers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The question is not sufficiently clear or focused.</li> </ul>	<p>If the group really trusts that you do not have a specific answer in mind, you might give an example to give them an idea of the type of answer you are looking for.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the group feel unsafe, the group is not ready to participate.</li> </ul>	<p>Try less serious conversation topics until the group begins to trust you and the process and is confident that they will be taken seriously and/or are willing to take responsibility for the results.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions are not specific enough.</li> </ul>	<p>Test questions in advance by imagining how the group might answer.. If possible share questions with a co-facilitator.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants have a hidden agenda.</li> </ul>	<p>Ask more specific questions to give an opportunity for hidden agendas to become explicit.</p>



## Understanding Why the Process Isn't Working, continued

DIFFICULTIES	POSSIBLE REASONS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
5. Some Participants Dominate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perhaps they don't feel they have been heard (yes, even if the group finds this hard to believe!).</li> <li>The "boss" who is charged with responsibility for the outcome doesn't trust the group.</li> <li>Conversation style may be too open or appear unstructured.</li> <li>There is an imbalance between those who are quiet and those who love to speak in a group.</li> <li>Group wants to escape topic or responsibility.</li> </ul>	<p>Listen seriously, demonstrate "hearing them" by writing, or active listening, and respectfully cutting off—"I think we've got your main point(s). I'd love to hear more at the break. Now, somebody else."</p> <p>Take "the boss" aside, check for concerns, let him or her know what his or her choices are and the consequences of dominating: address his or her concerns in the process with the group if appropriate.</p> <p>Go around the room on a few questions. Ask each person to respond succinctly.</p> <p>Divide into small groups. You might mix quiet and expressive types together. Then have the groups report their results to the larger group.</p>
6. Group Goes Off On Tangents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group wants to escape topic or responsibility.</li> <li>Topic is unfocused or deemed irrelevant.</li> <li>Facilitator is too "wishy-washy" and does not really believe that the group "knows best what it's needs are."</li> </ul>	<p>Reflect with the group about what's happening, using the Guided Dialogue or by just asking the group, "Are we getting off the topic here? If so why?"</p> <p>Respectfully, but firmly, bring the group back to the subject. Restate the context and the questions.</p> <p>Remind yourself that facilitating is not about being liked by just letting the group "do what it wants to" but about allowing the group to get out its best wisdom.</p>



## Understanding Why the Process Isn't Working, *continued*

DIFFICULTIES	POSSIBLE REASONS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
7. Not Getting Useful Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic not deemed relevant by group.</li> <li>• Topic is too big to be dealt with adequately in one gathering.</li> <li>• Questions are not getting out useful information.</li> </ul>	<p>Ask the group why the topic is not relevant or what needs to be dealt with at the moment instead.</p> <p>Design several sessions or meetings on different parts of the topic.</p> <p>Check prepared questions. Work backward from desired or needed result to what data is needed at each level.</p>
8. Arguments Break Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group is following old patterns of being respectful of each other's views or are unaware of ways to hear each other.</li> <li>• Facilitator is showing bias or not treating everyone's answer with the same respect.</li> </ul>	<p>Remind group of multi-dimensional reality. Intervene respectfully – let the first person finish, then ask, "Now what is your perspective on this?" Invite someone else to respond.</p> <p>Ask "What are the underlying patterns, under these conflicting responses?"</p> <p>Check yourself to see whether you are receiving all answers and pushing beyond answers to authentic consensus. Remind yourself, "All responses are true or "correct" and are a part of the wisdom of the group."</p>
9. Group Challenges the Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator is not showing self-confidence.</li> <li>• Facilitator conveys mixed messages of expert and questioner.</li> <li>• Group is over sensitive to the facilitator's power.</li> </ul>	<p>Let people know at the beginning that you are using a carefully thought-through process and are not pushing for any particular answers.</p> <p>Check your questions to ensure open-endedness. Be sure you are not implying that "there is a right answer" that noone in the group has yet come up with.</p> <p>Use ORID with group to reflect on why. Use ORID on yourself to discover your own learnings. Offer to leave. Explain the possible consequences, both positive and negative.</p>



# Comparison of the Dialogue and Workshop Methods

Both methods are flexible, draw forth the group's wisdom, and are often used together in a meeting

	GUIDED DIALOGUE METHOD	CONSENSUS WORKSHOP METHOD
<b>Uniqueness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• starts with a topic, event, concept, or past experience</li> <li>• reveals common ground</li> <li>• takes what is and goes deeper - probes meaning</li> <li>• explores topics in depth</li> <li>• can be done informally</li> <li>• process is invisible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• starts with an open-ended question that brings out individual answers</li> <li>• reveals consensus that is already</li> <li>• reveals relationships between ideas</li> <li>• exposes present consensus</li> <li>• gets out all the information &amp; perspectives to a question and presents them in writing</li> <li>• visually allows connections to be built between very diverse or opposing ideas through the clustering process</li> </ul>
<b>When to use alone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to reveal a "larger picture" of a topic</li> <li>• to reflect on script, poems, videos, or presentations, projects, events, accomplishments or any past experience, etc.</li> <li>• to discuss a topic with a lot of tension or emotion around it</li> <li>• when consensus is not required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on any topic where you can brainstorm 15 or more different ideas</li> <li>• on a topic where people have different perspectives</li> <li>• to catalyze people's creativity or get out everyone's thinking on an issue</li> <li>• to move beyond answers already know</li> <li>• on a single delimited focus questions</li> </ul>
<b>How to use together</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent way to begin a workshop</li> <li>• excellent way to reflect on the experience of a workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be used to generate options for a guided dialogue</li> <li>• can be used at the interpretive level of a dialogue when decisions are required</li> </ul>

# *Story for a Guided Dialogue*

## **VILLAGE STORY**

***Once upon a time there were two villages connected by a single road. One village produced food for itself and its neighbor; the other provided both with hunting equipment. One day a huge dragon settled across the road, blocking travel between the two villages. Villagers attacked it with spears that splintered against the beast's thick hide. They tried to lasso it, but the dragon's flames burned the ropes to ashes. Week after week they labored, sacrificing many lives and finally giving up in despair. Their food was depleted and the supply of hunting equipment exhausted in the battle against the dragon.***

***One day a youth climbed a tree to observe the dragon and discovered a remarkable thing; a farmer from a distant village was dumping garbage right under the dragon's snout. An envoy was soon dispatched to ask the farmer to move his dump to a remote field. The dragon relocated to this new feeding area, and the two villages were once again able to travel the road and serve each other.***



# Sample Questions for the Village Story Dialogue

**Topic:** Guided Dialogue on the *Village Story*

**Objective Purpose:** Discuss and understand what the story is really talking about.

**Subjective Experience:** To have fun discussing a short story

**Introduction/Opening:** Let me read a short story to you. Read it once. Then pass out story to participants and ask a participant to volunteer to read the story aloud.

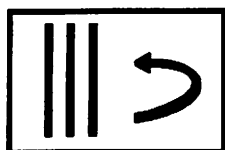
**Your Intent at Each Level:**



**Level One ~ Objective:** [\_\_minutes]

- What word or words jumped out at you?
- What other phrases stuck in your mind?
- Which villager did you identify with in the story?

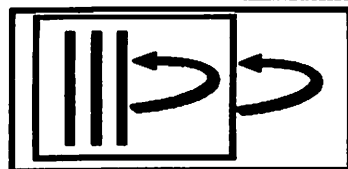
- Invite participation with easy questions
- Recall story



**Level Two ~ Responsive:** [\_\_minutes]

- What visual pictures or images came to mind as the story was read?
- What color was the dragon?
- Where is the village?
- What emotions were you aware of within you as the story was read?

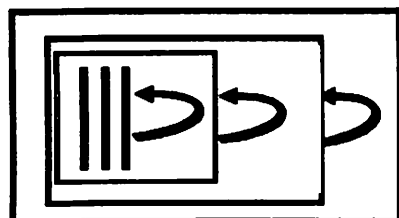
- Evoke group's imagination
- Share emotional response to the story



**Level Three ~ Interpretive:** [\_\_minutes]

- When have you labored fruitlessly and finally giving up in despair?
- When have you observed a dragon?
- Where in your life do you need to climb up into a tree?

- Relate story to personal experiences
- Get out multiple perspectives about what the story is about



**Level Four ~ Depth:** [\_\_minutes]

- So just what is this story all about?

- Draw out people's latent wisdom from their own experiences
- Discuss the meaning of the story

**Reflect/Closing:** [\_\_minutes]

I don't know about you, but I hope that I can look at the problems and issues that I face in my life and work from the perspective of the tree.

# *The Woodcarver* - From *The Way of Chuang Tsz*, ed. & trans. by Thomas Merton, pp 110-111

**Khing, the master carver, made a bell stand  
Of precious wood. When it was finished,  
all who saw it were astounded.  
They said it must be  
The work of spirits.  
The Prince of Lu said to the master carver:  
"What is your secret?"**

**Khing replied: "I am only a workman:  
I have no secret. There is only this:  
When I began to think about the work  
you commanded  
I guarded my spirit, did not expend it  
On trifles, that were not to the point.**

**"I fasted in order to set  
My heart at rest.  
After three days fasting,  
I had forgotten gain and success.  
After five days  
I had forgotten praise or criticism.  
After seven days  
I had forgotten my body with all of its limbs.**

**"By this time all thought of your Highness  
And of the court had faded away.  
All that might distract me from the work  
Had vanished.  
I was collected in the single thought  
Of the bell stand**

**"Then I went to the forest  
To see the trees in their own natural state.  
When the right tree appeared before my eyes,  
The bell stand also appeared in it,  
Clearly, beyond doubt.  
All I had to do was to put forth my hand and begin.**

**"If I had not met this particular tree  
There would have been  
No bell stand at all.**

**"What happened?  
My own collected thought  
Encountered the hidden potential in the wood  
From this live encounter came the work  
Which you ascribe to the spirits.**



# Guided Dialogue on *The Woodcarver*

**Topic:** *The Woodcarver*, from *The Way of Chuang Tsz*, ed. & trans. by Thomas Merton

## Objective Purpose:

To explore what meaningful engagement or action is all about

## Subjective Experience:

To experience the depth of any action or task

## Introduction/Opening:

Read the poem to the group. Then pass it out and go around the group, with each participant reading one line of the poem aloud.

## Your Intent at Each Level:

- Review lines of poem
- Get out everyone's voice

- Get out emotional responses to poem
- Elicit imaginative images

- Explore what the poem means
- Share experiences of meaningful engagement

- Expose depth meaning of poem
- Encourage personal resolves



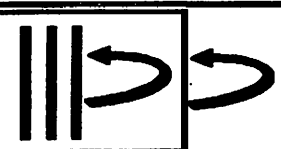
### Level One ~ Objective: [\_\_minutes]

- What words caught your attention?
- What phrases or lines stood out?
- Who were the characters in this poem?



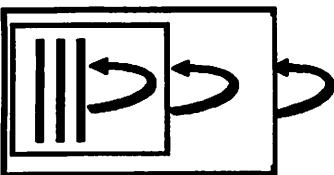
### Level Two ~ Responsive: [\_\_minutes]

- What emotions were felt by Khing?
- What emotions did you feel when listening to poem?
- What did the bell stand look like?
- What lines of dialogue made sense to you? Which ones didn't?



### Level Three ~ Interpretive: [\_\_minutes]

- What was the "secret?"
- How did the master carver prepare for his task?
- When have you seen someone prepared for a task in this way?
- When have you prepared for a task in this way?



### Level Four ~ Depth: [\_\_minutes]

- In a few words, just what is this poem about?
- What will it look like for you to act as the woodcarver?

**Reflect/Closing:** [\_\_minutes]

Thank you very much.

# *The Tao of Leadership - Leadership Strategies for a New Age*

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## **#17 BEING A MIDWIFE**

The wise facilitator does not intervene unnecessarily. The facilitator's presence is felt but often the group turns itself.

Lessor leaders do a lot, say a lot, have followers and form cults.

Even worse ones use fear to energize the group and force to overcome resistance. Only the most dreadful leaders have bad reputations.

Remember that you are facilitating another person's process. It is not your process. Do not intrude. Do not control. Do not force your own needs and insights into the foreground.

If you do not trust a person's process, that person will not trust you. Do good without show or fuss. Facilitate what is happening rather than what you think ought to be happening. If you must take the lead, lead so that the mother is helped, yet still free and in charge.

When the baby is born, the mother will rightly say: "We did it ourselves!"

## **#8 WATER**

The wise facilitator is like water.

Consider water: Water cleanses and refreshes all creatures without distinction and without judgment: water freely and fearlessly goes deep beneath the surface of things; water is fluid and responsive; water follows the law freely.

Consider the facilitator: the facilitator works in any setting without complaint, with any person or issue that comes on the floor; the facilitator acts so that all will benefit and serves well regardless of the rate of pay; the facilitator serves simply and honestly and intervenes in order to shed light and create harmony.

From watching the movements of water, the facilitator has learned that in action, timing is everything.

Like water, the facilitator is yielding. Because the facilitator does not push, the group does not resent or resist.

## **#14 KNOWING WHAT IS HAPPENING**

When you cannot see what is happening in a group, do not stare harder. Relax and look gently with your inner eye.

When you do not understand what a person is saying do not grasp for every word. Give up your efforts. Become silent inside and listen with your deepest self.

When you are puzzled by what you see or hear, do not strive to figure things out. Stand back for a moment and become calm. When a person is calm, complex events appear simple.

To know what is happening, push less, open out and be aware. See without staring. Listen quietly rather than trying to figure things out.

The more you can let go of trying, and the more open and receptive you become, the more easily you will know what is happening.

Also, stay in the present. The present is more available than either memories of the past or fantasies of the future.

So attend to what is happening now.

## **#49 BE OPEN TO WHATEVER EMERGES**

The wise facilitator does not impose a personal agenda or value system on the group.

The facilitator follows the group's lead and is open to whatever emerges. The facilitator judges no one and is attentive to both "good" and "bad" people. It does not even matter whether a person is telling the truth or lying.

Being open and attentive is more effective than being judgmental. This is because people naturally tend to be good and truthful when they are being received in a good and truthful manner.

Perhaps the facilitator seems naive and childlike in this uncritical openness to whatever emerges. But openness is simply more potent than any system of judgement ever devised.

*Exerpts from John Heider*



## *Additional Resources*

There is now a professional association for facilitators. For information about the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), contact the IAF office:

International Association of Facilitators  
7630 West 145th Street, Suite 202  
St. Paul, MN 55124  
612-891-3541  
Fax: 612-891-1800  
Email: [iafoffice@igc.org](mailto:iafoffice@igc.org)  
Website: <http://www.iaf-world.org>

Many facilitators share ideas, ask questions, and dialogue through an on-line conference called `misc.business.facilitators (mbf)`. Mbf is an open Usenet Newsgroup. Most facilitators, however, prefer the ease of receiving and sending conference posts through email via GRP-FACL, the listserv version of mbf. Billed as "Group Facilitation: Process expertise for group effectiveness," the listserv is a moderated forum on the practice and theory of facilitation. To subscribe, see below.

This is your invitation to join the GRP-FACL listserv.

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