



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
*Partners for Better Communities*



Community and  
Economic  
Development

# GROUP TO GOAL

*Facilitating Community  
Development Processes*

Oxbow Center  
St. Paul, Virginia

October 10 • 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
December 11 • 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

# OUTCOME

Participants will be better prepared for and more comfortable in guiding group processes

# AGENDA

Day 1: October 10

9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## MORNING: A FOUNDATION

9:30 a.m.	Welcome!
9:35	What's in a Name?
9:40	The Icebreaker
10:00	Reflections: Meeting Challenges
10:30	OARRS
10:45	The Shared Responsibility
11:05	<i>Break</i>
11:15	Community Voices
12:00 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>

## AFTERNOON: GETTING IN SOME PRACTICE

12:45	Regroup - An audio inspiration
1:00	Group Development and the Role of the Facilitator
1:20	The Question
1:40	The Group Memory
1:50	Ode to a Meeting ( <i>A small group practice opportunity!</i> )
2:15	<i>Break</i>
2:25	Anatomy of an Effective Meeting ( <i>An on-the-fly practice opportunity!</i> )
3:00	The Shape of the Group
3:10	Moving Groups Toward Decision
3:20	Think, Pair, Share ( <i>A practice opportunity!</i> )
3:50	Small Group ( <i>A practice opportunity!</i> )
4:10	Large Group Practice Session 1: Plus/Delta
4:30	<i>Adjourn for the day</i>

Day 2: October 11

9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

## CREATIVE CONFLICT AND PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

9:30 a.m.	Welcome
9:35	Further Observations from Day One
9:40	Icebreaker
9:55	Agenda and Outcome Review
10:00	You and Conflict
10:10	Building Agreement: Values, Communication and Conflict
10:45	Personalities!
	<i>Break</i>
11:15	Let's Have a Meeting!
11:45	Learning recap and personal reflection
12:00	<i>Lunch</i>
	Lunch conversation: Reflections on Our Work Ahead (Shannon Blevins)
1:00	<i>Adjourn</i>

## ROLES

- My role in this meeting is that of:
- What I want to get out of the training:
- To make the meeting more effective in getting the most out of this personally, I will:

## RESPONSIBILITIES

These are some of the responsibilities that we each share in to make our meeting more effective:

## SCOPE

It is in our power to:

# ICEBREAKERS

Use an icebreaker to:

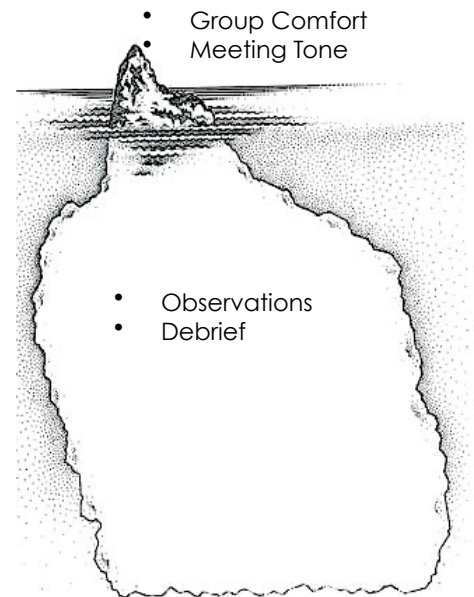
- Warm up the group.
- Build energy.
- Set meeting tone.
- Introduce participants.
- Refresh group memory.
- Increase comfort level.
- Create a shared experience and knowledge to draw upon later.

Use the icebreaker to observe:

- Individual interaction styles.
- Comfort levels.
- Biases.
- Observe clues to group history and cliques.

Use the icebreaker's debrief to:

- Connect it to the content.
- Connect it to a current group challenge, task, or decision.
- Surround concern for an outcome in camaraderie (fun).
- Leave behind tools for future meetings.



Note:

When selecting an icebreaker, try to match it to the meeting's outcomes. Be careful with unknown groups and the comfort and ability levels participants have with physical icebreakers.

## Resources

Here are some resources for icebreakers:

- *The Big Book of Icebreakers*, by Edie West
- [www.icebreakers.ws](http://www.icebreakers.ws)
- [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_76.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_76.htm)

# REFLECTIONS

## Facilitation Challenges

No matter how long we have been working in community development—fostering community resilience, building local capacity and advancing community goals—we are all working to improve our ready-at-the-hip tools for managing group processes. Every community is different. Every meeting requires its own unique path in shaping a well-functioning group of individuals—and then moving that team toward its goal.

Consider a particular meeting you've facilitated or participated in recently. What unique challenge did you face? What tools did you try? Were they successful? What's the next challenge for the group? What's the next step for you in your growth as a facilitator?

Note: if you don't have a work related example right now, feel free to use a meeting from your civic or personal community engagement.

Meeting participants:

Meeting goal:

What decisions were to be made?

Who set the agenda?

Who led the meeting?

Were decisions made?

Were next steps identified?

What facilitation tools were effective?

Were there any disruptive actions by participants?

At which point in the meeting did you feel less sure about your role in facilitating?

What challenges went unaddressed or may emerge at the next meeting?

# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

## OARRS

It takes the entire group to make a meeting run well, but it starts with some solid planning. As a rule of thumb, advance planning typically takes two to three times as long as the meeting itself! Use your OARRS from meeting planning to the follow up, and keep everyone rowing together.

### Outcome:

- Where do we need to get?
- What decisions need to be made?

### Agenda:

- How are we going to get there?

### Roles:

- Who does what to make the meeting effective?
  - Does a chair oversee the process?
  - Is there an outside facilitator?
  - Are there committee chairs make reports?
  - Are presentations needed from outside resources?
  - Who drafts an agenda?
  - Who books the room?
  - Who gets there early to set up?
  - Who brings the munchies?
  - Who records what happens?
  - Who tracks the next steps?



### Responsibilities:

Once we're in the meeting, we each share in the responsibilities to reach the outcome. The chair or facilitator isn't out there alone.

Each group can establish norms or ground rules for how they work together. They can become standard, posted on a wall, listed in an organizational guide, and referred to at the start of meetings. Developing them as a group improves the buy-in of members and can be lead to important conversations based in values. Some typical ground rules, shared responsibilities, or participant guidelines include:

- |                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Limit side conversations | Don't interrupt                |
| A willing, open approach | Speak for yourself, not others |
| Be present               | We all learn together          |
| Everyone has a voice     |                                |

### Scope: What are we empowered to do?

- Who else do we need to invite to get where we want to go?

# FLIP CHARTS: *THE GROUP MEMORY*

## THE POWER OF FOCUS

More than anything the flip chart provides a way to focus the attention of the group on a single point. For that reason many facilitators choose to do their own recording.

## THE BENEFITS OF A TEAM

Other facilitators use a team. A well practiced team of a facilitator and a recorder can guide a conversation, capturing the information on a flip chart and not divide the room into two focal points. The danger of not using a recorder is the loss of connection and control of the group when the facilitator's back is turned, writing on the chart. If you choose or have to record yourself, try to write to your side, so that you don't have to turn your back.

## FLIP CHARTS

While the flip chart isn't the only tool—we can use white boards, Smart boards, projected word, PowerPoint, mind mapping and spreadsheet tools—it is perhaps the most flexible.

## ON COMFORT

Being comfortable at popping up to focus and record the group is a big benefit in the facilitative services we can provide communities to help local leadership emerge. Just standing up at the chart helps the group know someone's in charge.

## SOME TIPS

### **Name and Number**

- Put titles at the top of each page.
- Use page numbers for topics continued across multiple sheets.

### **Write and draw**

- Use alternating colors to separate consecutive items in a list.
- Use bullets to separate ideas.
- Use lines to separate topics on the same page.
- Add depth to bullets and embellishments.
- Leave space in margins to go back.
- Use arrows for important ideas and direction.
- Use symbols and doodles for emphasis.

### **Reveal and display**

- Have plenty of wall space ready to display multiple sheets at one time.
- Keep all pages of one topic visible while the group is working on it.
- Cover flip chart pages and portions of topics you haven't gotten to yet.
- Pre-tear small pieces of tape for ease of posting charts and covering.

### **Point and Click**

- Refer back to flip charts as the conversation continues to visually refresh group memory.
- Photograph flip chart pages for ease of transcribing.
- Include photographs of a couple of important flip chart sheets in the final notes.

# INFORMATION GATHERING

## ORID: A QUESTION FRAMEWORK

Before a group can confidently make a decision, its members need to feel that they have incorporated and processed an appropriate amount of information. The ORID method of strategic questioning, a useful tool in helping a group get to that point.

Developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs ([www.ica-usa.org](http://www.ica-usa.org)), the ORID structure used in ToP® Facilitation guides the group toward decisions through a thorough exploration of four basic types of questions: **O**bjective, **R**eflective, **I**nterpretive, and **D**ecisional.

**Objective** questions explore *facts* relevant to the topic.

**Reflective** questions probe *how people feel* about a topic.

**Interpretive** questions ask *what the information potentially means* for the group.

**Decisional** questions ask *what the group is going to do*.

By separating facts from feelings, both are given value, but understood for what they are. Additionally interpretation is understood as subjective information, but the best available, given that it can involve future outcomes and unknowns.

The role of the facilitator using ORID strategic questioning is to focus the types of questions and responses appropriate within each phase of the meeting, keeping responses in the right stage, and moving the group together through each phase, and one step closer to decisions.



# MINING GROUP KNOWLEDGE

## WHY WE CONVENE

Fundamental to our shared approach in working with communities is the belief that those who live in a community know it best and are best positioned to develop plans and act. In addition to financial resources, we can infuse their processes with new tools, knowledge, and an understanding of best practices. We can strengthen the capacity of individuals and groups to effect change.

## TOOLS FOR GATHERING INPUT

Once a community or organization gets participants in a room to be part of a process, we have a responsibility to make efficient use of their time and to use the opportunity to move a community closer to identifying or carrying out its goals. Here are a few tools frequently used in specific conditions to elicit input.

**Whole Group Discussions:** Good for starting out and wrapping up sessions, creating foundational conversations, and getting voices heard by the whole group.

- Focused question with recording (see pages 7-8)
- Cardstorming (see page 14)
- Round Robins (ask each person, going around in a circle)
- Survey in a show of hands as a group

**Small Group:** Good to encourage closer connections among members, to allow for more engagement in a very large group setting, and to provide a more comfortable setting for less participative members.

- Small groups focused on same topic
  - Report out with additions
  - Combine small groups until it builds the whole
- Small groups focused on different questions
  - Report outs
- Focused on a question series
- Gallery walk
  - SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats)
  - Start, Stop, Keep-On

**Individual:** Good to bring in the unique perspective of the individual, allow thinking time for everyone, and to pull input from every participant.

- Written response
- Comment wall
- Electronic survey

# THE FLOW OF EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

## PLANNING FOR FACILITATION SUCCESS

As a rule of thumb, it takes between two and three times the length of a meeting to plan it. Thinking through the OARRS tools on page 6 is an important start. Additionally, the decision making process needs to be considered carefully.

- What kind of decision is to be made?
- What information is needed prior?
- How much processing time is needed with the information?
- Are the different types of information available being considered?
- Are there time constraints?
- Will it require more than one meeting?

# GROUP DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

Stage	Object	Facilitator Role
<p><b><u>Forming</u></b>                      The group is first coming together or adding new members: inclusion questions, politeness, low conflict</p>		1.
		2.
		3.
<p><b><u>Storming</u></b>                      Group members are struggling for influence, control: disagreements over process.</p>		1.
		2.
		3.
<p><b><u>Norming:</u></b>                      The group is moving toward interdependence, and a sense of belonging: norms emerging.</p>		1.
		2.
		3.
<p><b><u>Performing</u></b>                      The group is becoming collaborative and productive: task focused with shared goals.</p>		1.
		2.
		3.

# GROUP DEVELOPMENT

When we bring a group together to develop or carry out a project, advise on a program or solution, or formalize a vision for what they want a community or neighborhood to be, we are often starting a group from scratch. But it's not just new groups that go through a group development process. Tuckman identified four stages that every group goes through, and we can apply those in thinking through groups from the temporarily convened to the longstanding.

Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. *(Tuckman, 1965)\**

This framework is simple, but it's surprisingly useful in understanding a group or an organization as moving through natural stages of development. It can help you, as a facilitator, understand what the group needs when. It can help the group understand points of conflict as natural and manageable.

FORMING	Forming:	Facilitator's Task:
	<p><i>This characterizes the time when a group is first coming together, or when new members are joining the group.</i></p> <p>Some have referred to this as the "ritual sniffing" phase.</p> <p>Group members are concerned about inclusion: whether and how they belong and how safe it is to be part of this group. Therefore, this stage is characterized by politeness, low conflict and superficial disclosure.</p> <p>The group often looks to the facilitator or leader for strong direction.</p>	<p>The task of the facilitator in this stage is to assess what work needs to be done in the group around forming and then to structure an appropriate opening so that people can feel safe, legitimized, valued and have a sanctioned way to "sniff" one another, as needed.</p> <p>Forming can be accomplished through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>introductions and orientation</i></li> <li>• <i>reviewing the "road map" (desired outcomes and agenda)</i></li> <li>• <i>warm up activities</i></li> <li>• <i>inviting expressions of expectations</i></li> <li>• <i>establishing ground rules or working agreements</i></li> <li>• <i>agreeing upon decision-making methods</i></li> </ul>
	<p><i>When the Facilitator is new to an existing Group...</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator's Task:</i></p> <p>An interesting twist to the forming stage occurs when the facilitator is new to an intact group. In this instance, you need to draw the group back to the forming stage just long enough to get to know you and be assured that you are safe enough to include in the group. Beware doing too much forming for your sake (long introductions of each person); you may lose the group. You will have done some of this work, of course, prior to the start of the first meeting by meeting group members, learning about their history, culture, in-jokes, etc.</p>	

\*Later, a fifth phase, Adjourning, was added. And it almost rhymes. *(Tuckman and Jensen, 1977)*

## GROUP DEVELOPMENT continued

STORMING	<i>Storming:</i>	<i>Facilitator's Task:</i>
	<p><i>Storming is the stage where members are concerned about control, power and influence.</i></p> <p>It often manifests through disagreements about process, emotional responses to task demands, and challenges to the facilitator or leader.</p> <p><i>Note: Not every conflict is an indication of storming. Healthy conflict over content and process can occur at every stage of group development.</i></p>	<p>The task of the facilitator in this stage is to assess and name the specific storming issues of the group, and guide and model good conflict resolution process.</p> <p>This can be accomplished by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>first and foremost, remembering you are not the target</i></li> <li>• <i>servicing as a mirror to the group</i></li> <li>• <i>separating the problem from the person</i></li> <li>• <i>acknowledging, then dealing with or deferring concerns</i></li> <li>• <i>enforcing the ground rules</i></li> <li>• <i>being assertive in your role as process expert</i></li> </ul>
NORMING	<i>Norming:</i>	<i>Facilitator's Task:</i>
	<p><i>Norming is the stage in which group members move toward inter-dependence.</i></p> <p>Individually, group members are focused on building caring and a sense of belonging in the group.</p>	<p>The task of the facilitator is to support the group in their high functioning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>mirroring back and recording the norms that are emerging</i></li> <li>• <i>affirming the group's cohesiveness and the work it has taken to get there</i></li> <li>• <i>affirming the positive value of expressing differences</i></li> <li>• <i>guiding the group through collaborative negotiation</i></li> <li>• <i>providing opportunities for the group to enjoy its connectedness</i></li> </ul>
PERFORMING	<i>Performing:</i>	<i>Facilitator's Task:</i>
	<p><i>Performing is the stage where the group is working collaboratively and is highly productive.</i></p> <p>To an outsider, the group might appear to be only task focused, but the strong underpinnings of trust, respect, shared norms and overarching goals are in place.</p>	<p>The task of the facilitator at this stage is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>offer effective processes for getting the task accomplished</i></li> <li>• <i>format the work in a way that is useful to the group</i></li> <li>• <i>affirm the good work of the group</i></li> <li>• <i>stay out of the way when not needed</i></li> </ul>

\*Excerpted and adapted from  
Dee Kelsey and Pam Plumb's *Great Meetings! Great Results!*

# A BRAINSTORMING TOOL

## WHY CARDSTORMING?

Cardstorming is a fast-paced method for mining the collective ideas or knowledge of a group. It allows us:

- To efficiently get a list compiled with full participation from the group.
- To elicit responses from everyone.
- To give each person time to think independently.
- To Avoid “groupthink” up front.
- To demonstrate how aligned or diverse the group of ideas is.
- To work with the information,
  - Combining ideas.
  - Sorting them into categories.
  - Change the categories to work the information in a new way (after taking a picture of the first set).

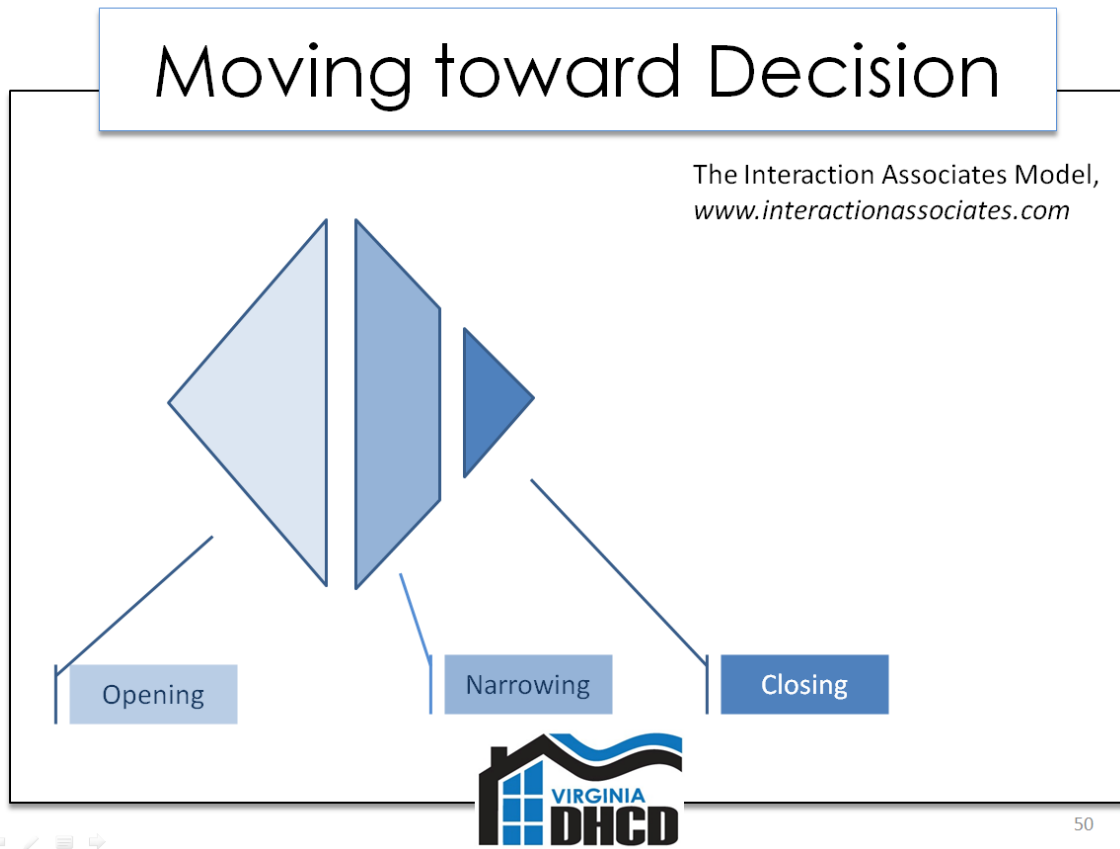
## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Large slips of paper or big sticky notes
- Fat markers
- Blue sheet or adhesive sprayed flip chart paper
- Camera
- Wall space or flip charts

## CARDSTORMING INSTRUCTIONS

- Display and read a focus question.
- Check in for clarity and understanding.
- Ask each person to use individual sheets of paper to list responses (one per paper.)
- Ask them to write clearly and large, using the fat markers.
- Set a time limit and call time when it's up.
- Ensure you have everyone's attention before continuing.
- Ask for the clearest response in our first round.
- After getting each response, collect other identical and closely similar responses
- Repeat until all responses are gathered.
- Group and theme based on the question.
- Title each group with a different color sheet of paper or a symbol. The symbol allows groups to emerge without pinning down what they have in common.
- Check-in for agreement of the group where options emerge in the sorting.
- Do a big-picture check-in on the groups.
- Ask if anyone wants to try defining the groups.
- Then do another brainstorm round with the defined groups to see if the themes have prompted additional ideas. In action planning, these group definitions are often goals.

# A DECISION MAKING MODEL



Here's a model from [Interaction Associates](http://www.interactionassociates.com). It's a square, tipped on its end and pulled apart.

It can give you a check in and an easy way to communicate the decision making process with the group. This can be very handy when you want to move a group out of the **opening** phase—where we list lots of options—*brainstorming*. Groups can get stuck there. Because when you start to take items off the table in **narrowing**, there's greater opportunity for conflict. We sometimes as a group know that and avoid the potential, if we're not confident that our group can withstand it.

You can narrow by grouping and sorting, but you can also narrow by taking items off of the list because the group decides that they aren't feasible or perhaps the group's not ready to take them on. This can come out in reaction and interpretation questions. Finally in **closing** we are ushering the group into a decision, one that they can act upon.

## Narrowing

Group like ideas  
Sort into themes  
Prioritize to limit the field

## Closing

Build up and eliminate  
Negative poll  
Pluses and minuses  
Straw poll

# A NARROWING TOOL

## WHY MULTI-VOTING

Multi-voting is a process for narrowing down a larger list of items and indicating a group's interest or priority in each item. Even though it's often called multi-voting, the vote is not a final vote per se; it's more of a prioritization. Pure voting is not nearly as likely to build agreement toward consensus. This allows members of the group to have layered discussions and to internalize the constraints involved.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. If it hasn't already been done, make sure there is clarity about the meaning of each idea/option item on the list. Where there is agreement to do so, combine like ideas.
2. Everyone gets the same of number of votes. A guideline often used is dividing the number of options by three. That is likely to allow clear choices to emerge.
3. Members can cast votes by making marks or placing sticky notes on the flip chart, by a show of hands, or secret ballot.
4. Clearly describe the method for vote distribution. There are two common ways for individuals to distribute their votes:
  - One way is to agree that no item on the list can get more than one vote from one person. For example, if group members each have five votes, they would vote on five different items.
  - The second way is to agree that individuals can distribute their votes, however, they choose, putting all votes on one item, one vote on five different items, etc.
5. Once the votes are tallied, be clear about what happens to all the items on the list. Don't assume that those items that received fewer votes should be cast aside. Ask the group what it wants to do with the items that received fewer votes.



# A CLOSING TOOL

## ACTION PLANNING

By narrowing ideas, presumably a group has selected their most preferred ideas or solutions. But what happens to these ideas or solutions after a group has decided to implement them? An action plan provides a group with a structure to effectively and efficiently follow-through on decisions made during a meeting. Act now! Get the plan down while there is energy in the room from the ideas.

The following model defines a group's goal based on decisions made; determines if the goal is short-term or long-term; defines the action steps necessary to accomplish the goal; and determines who will do which action step and by when. Action plans need to be tailored to you individual and group needs.

## DIRECTIONS

1. Facilitate the group to define its goal based on decisions it has made. In the case of cardstorming, these will be grouped and prioritized items.
2. Ask the group to determine if the goal is short-term or long-term.
3. Ask the group to determine or refine the action steps necessary to accomplish the goals, who will do which action step and by when.
4. Include a form of accountability, measurement, time, and inputs.
  - o Who will do it? "Who will put some personal energy behind this?"
  - o By when will it be accomplished?
  - o How will we know we've accomplished the action? What is the target?
  - o What additional resources are needed to get it done?

## SAMPLE ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

GOAL:			TERM:	
Action	Target	Responsibility	Completed by Date	Resources Needed

# CONFLICT, COMMUNICATION AND VALUES

## CONFLICT

When conflict arises in a group, it's not the facilitator's role to take sides, but to focus the group on its process. Ground rules are a tool established by the group for just that purpose. Times ripe for conflict include when:

- individuals vie for influence in the group's storming stage (see page 13),
- a group becomes more diverse by adding new voices,
- there is an acknowledged scarcity of resources, and
- a group has to finally prioritize,

As long as a group thinks it can do everything and puts off prioritizing, it will scatter energy, accomplishing less than it could otherwise. Without consciously prioritizing, actions will happen in a default manner; they do what they've always done.

We each prefer to deal conflict in different way as individuals, and we have preferences as groups as well. Some basic approaches:

<b>Avoiding:</b>	Withdraw from the situation, and leave the outcome to chance.
<b>Harmonizing:</b>	Covering up the differences and claim things are fine.
<b>Bargaining:</b>	Negotiate for some gains and concessions by all parties.
<b>Forcing:</b>	Push a party to accept a decision made by a leader or majority.
<b>Problem Solving:</b>	Confront differences and resolve collaboratively.

## COMMUNICATION

Conflict itself opens a door to new understandings and strategies. But first the group needs to acknowledge the conflict and go deeper into it. Typically that means mapping the interests of those involved. There might be overlap when we think in terms of *interests* rather than *positions*. By discussing interests, we get more insight into a difference in underlying values.

Because conflict is an opportunity for discussion leading to greater understanding, look out for body language, tone, and other hints of underlying conflict. Use your confident handle on the process to help the group surface the conflict.

*“When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that is in itself a choice.”*

William James

# CONFLICT, COMMUNICATION AND VALUES continued

## VALUES

For some reason, we are often hesitant to talk about values. But when we do, we often find we aren't that far apart. We also find that groups enjoy the deeper conversation. Easy entry points to values are meeting ground rules and fundamental conversations about mission and goals. Your very presence in a group as an external facilitator can also open the door to asking meaningful questions such as, 'What do you value as a group?'

Without an understanding of what motivates us and drives our work, there is little chance of us performing well together. In the deeper conversation we can seek out common areas of agreement and strategies that support multiple interests...not just one position.

## CONSENSUS

Consensus building is used to more fully invest the participants of a group in the group decision. The discussion of consensus can be an important step in building group cohesion and the active support for the follow up on decisions. A consensus building process, unlike a simple majority vote, is actively facilitated for clarity, understanding, and discussion of decision points. From the consensus process, each participant can make the following statements:

- I had an opportunity to participate in the decision making process.
- My voice was heard.
- No one really got completely what they wanted.
- I understand the group's decision.
- I can actively support the decision of the group.

# FACILITATION TOOLS

## KEY TOOLS OF THE PRACTICED FACILITATOR

### PERSPECTIVE AND FOCUS

- The big picture
- The process
- Multiple goals at one time:
  - Meeting the time schedule
  - Broadening participation
  - Ensuring a collaborative process
  - Positive energy

### GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY

- OARRS (page 6)
- The *Draft Agenda* to build agreement
- Shared responsibility... the established guidelines or ground rules
- Personal Expectations: personal responsibility (pages 3 and 5)
- Values, mission statements and visions
- The check-in for understanding and agreement
- The process break
- The debrief
- Observation
- Permission to give feedback: Say what you see going on.
- Performance Check-ins: “How do you think you’re doing as a group?”

### SUBTLE CONTROL

- Interventions for challenging behavior (pages 21-22)
- Boomeranging the question back
- Energy shift
- Voice fluctuation
- Body placement
- Laughter
- Silence

### QUESTIONS

- Open Questions
- ORID (page 8)
- What, where, when, and how: Why ‘why’ makes people defensive.
- Start easy and go deeper

### FLEXIBILITY

- The parking lot
- The up-front back-up plan

### CONFLICT

- Assigned perspectives (*Six Thinking Hats* by Edward de Bono)
- Small agreements  Relational self-interest rather than positions

# RESOURCES

## The Community Toolbox

The Community Tool Box is a free resource for information on essential skills for building healthy communities. It offers more than 7,000 pages of practical guidance in creating change and improvement. [www.ctb.ku.edu](http://www.ctb.ku.edu)

## Meetinggenie.com

Free one-page downloads on specific topics for facilitating meetings and moving groups toward decisions. [www.meetinggenie.com](http://www.meetinggenie.com)

## Mindtools.com

Free articles and tools on topics from strategic planning to stress management. Sign up for the weekly newsletter, and check out the site for a little inspiration as you start planning your next meeting or begin thinking through an organizational challenge. [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)

## Your Colleagues

A quick brainstorm on an issue with a colleague can be just the kick start you need in designing an effective meeting agenda and overcoming challenging situations. And as we work on these together, we are better able to layer resources and effectively partner with communities to help them meet their goals.

## Your Friends at DHCD

### **Ramona Chapman**

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# INTERVENTIONS

## Sample Interventions for More Productive Groups

\*Adapted and expanded from *How to Make Meetings Work* by Michael Doyle and David Strauss

### *Time challenged*

The Chronic Latecomer: Wait until after the meeting and ask if there are reasons they are always late. Don't lecture. Ask what can be done to make the meetings run better so that they will be on time. If nothing else works, give them a job up front at a future meeting.

The Chronic Early Leaver: In a side conversation, ask if a change in the meeting format will allow complete attendance. Refer to the ground rules, or at the beginning of the next meeting ask if everyone can be there for the full time to state the expectations of the group.

### *Distracters*

The Side Converser: Move closer, maybe touch the table. Then: "Let's keep a single focus on this topic."

The Loudmouth: Move closer, maintaining eye contact while they are talking.

The Interpreter: When someone interjects to clarify the comments of someone else, ask the original speaker if that interpretation is correct.

The Multi-taskers: You may need to address use of cell phones up front in participant guidelines, but folks are connected and like to stay that way. The group may want to establish phone use as a function to occur during breaks. If participants know when a break is coming, they are better able to resist the lure of the screen. To curb use by rogue texters, try these strategies: refer to the accepted ground rules; get groups up and interacting away from desks; position yourself by them; or ask them a question, calling them by name.

### *Experts*

The Broken Record: Give air time to someone worked up and hanging onto an issue. "Why don't we take three minutes now to hear what you have got to say? We want to know everyone heard you and we want you to be able to move along with us through the rest of the meeting."

The Doubting Thomas: Ask the group not to evaluate any ideas until all of the evidence is in. If interruptive, refer to the ground rules. If they are skeptical of the process, show that you heard them and ask them to hang in there for ten minutes to see where it can get.

The Headshaker: If someone gives repeated negative cues, check in on the process with them. It can be asked in a neutral way or if it's overt, ask if they are disturbed with the process.

## INTERVENTIONS continued

The Know-It-All: “We recognize and respect your experience, but the group has to make the decision after weighing the alternatives.”

The Backseat Driver: Ask them for process recommendations and shift if the group’s will.

### *Non-participants*

The Best-Buddies: Breaking up comfortable groups of people can increase the flow of new ideas and strengthen bonds more broadly across a team. To mix it up, assign seats or groups, allow random pairings by having participants count off, or ask participants to partner with someone they don’t know.

The Wallflower: To elicit input from quiet participants, have everyone write down a response and then have everyone in the group read out their responses in a round robin. You can also give warning that you will call on a person who hasn’t participated. “We’ll hear from Joe and then I’d like to hear from some new voices: Sue and then Bob.” Alternatively, you can do work in pairs and very small groups.

The Dropout: Ask a question. Queue up the person who seems to have dropped out to give them a chance to be heard. “We’ll hear from Mary, then Bob (The Dropout).” It will let them be heard, and the issue may emerge. If not, see below.

The Obstinate Bystander: There are a variety of reasons for someone to want to be part of a group but not take part in its activities or follow their norms. Most are not valid. If the person is working to change the group, the group can hear out their desires and decide. If the person isn’t willing to work to effect change, but is still not participating, then it is best for that person to leave the group, and for the group to make the decision and the request. The facilitator can highlight these options, focus on the ground rules, and point back to the group process.

### *And occasionally...*

The Attacker: Redirect attacks from the personal level to the content level. These attacks are often subtle so be alert and watch for body language clues. Refer to ground rules if applicable.

The Agenda Hiders: Hidden agendas rarely stay hidden. If someone is heavily invested in one outcome, try getting it written down as an option. Once everyone understands that option, engage the whole group in identifying additional options to add to the list. Being clear about which phase of the decision process the group will help prevent the one option from being pushed through before the group is ready.

The Bad Day: Sometimes a group is not working well together. The cause could be any one of these. Check in with them by asking if you can give the group some feedback. Then point to the problem with the group and work with them to identify the underlying cause.

# NOTES