

Applying the Norms of Collaboration to Navigate Group Tensions

**BREAK OUT SESSION
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Outcomes



- Extended and refined understanding of conflict and using group tensions as a resource
- Application of the Norms of Collaboration to navigating group tensions
- Extended repertoire of strategies for acknowledging and refocusing resistance

AGENDA

- Welcome and Inclusion
- Promoting Cognitive Conflict
- Applying the Norms: Pausing, Paraphrasing and 3rd Point
- Acknowledging and Refocusing Resistance
- Organize and Integrate

THE SEVEN NORMS OF COLLABORATIVE WORK

Pausing

Pausing before responding or asking a question allows time for thinking and enhances dialogue, discussion, and decision-making.

Paraphrasing

Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you “So...” or “As you are...” or “You’re thinking...” and following the starter with a paraphrase assists members of the group to hear and understand one another as they formulate decisions.

Posing Questions

Two intentions of posing questions are to explore and specify thinking. Questions may be posed to explore perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations and invite others to inquire into their own thinking. For example, “What might be some outcomes we are envisioning?” Use focusing questions such as, “Which students, specifically?” or “What might be an example of that?” to increase the clarity and precision of group members’ thinking. Inquire into the ideas of others’ before advocating for one’s own ideas.

Providing data

Providing data, both qualitative and quantitative, in a variety of forms supports group members in constructing shared understanding from their work. Data have no meaning beyond that which we make of them; shared meaning develops from collaboratively exploring, analyzing, and interpreting data.

Putting ideas on the table

Ideas are the heart of a meaningful dialogue. Label the intention of your comments. For example, you might say, “Here is one idea...” or “One thought I have is...” or “Here is a possible approach...”

Paying attention to self and others

Meaningful dialogue is facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others, and is aware of not only what he or she is saying, but also how it is said and how others are responding. This includes paying attention to learning style when planning for, facilitating, and participating in group meetings. Responding to others in their own language forms is one manifestation of this norm.

Presuming positive intentions

Assuming that others’ intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and eliminates unintentional putdowns. Using positive intentions in your speech is one manifestation of this norm.

Two Kinds of Conflict

Affective Conflict:

Cognitive Conflict:



Jot your thoughts...

Which of the Norms of Collaboration might prevent affective conflict and support cognitive conflict?

Three Point Communication

Where might you use this strategy in your work?

Pausing and Paraphrasing

THE THREE TYPES OF PARAPHRASES

Acknowledging

A brief statement in the listener's own words

Metaphorically: a mirror

- You're concerned about...
- You would like to see...
- You're feeling bad about...

Organizing

A statement that offers themes or containers

Metaphorically: baskets or boxes

- You seem to have two goals here: one is about ____ and the other is about ____.
- We seem to be struggling with three themes: where to ____, how to ____, and who should ____.
- On the one hand, we ____, and on the other, we ____.

Abstracting

A statement that shifts the conversation to a higher or lower level of abstraction

Metaphorically: an elevator or escalator

Shifting up:

- value*
- belief
- goal
- assumption
- concept
- intention

****What's really important to you is...***

Acknowledging and Redirecting Resistance

Fourth Point Communication

Excerpt from: Lemons to Lemonade, Robert Garmston and Diane Zimmerman, Corwin, 2013

Third point communication directs attention away from people in the room, usually to a neutral object or space in the room, such as an easel, chair, or a document. Fourth point directs the attention to a person, place, event, or thing not present in the room. This can be helpful when needing to deflect some of the emotion to outside the meeting room. It can also be used to make the point that we can only work with what we have in the room at the time. Fourth point can be used to name the resistance.

One strategy for acknowledging and redirecting resistance uses first, second, third and fourth point communication. The skilled facilitator can help redirect resistance with respectful language that honors participants and addresses the root of the issue.

The interaction is choreographed. Following is one example of a director delivering “bad” news to a group of teachers that they must attend a day-long seminar/ meeting at the beginning of the start of school. Her outcome was to deliver the unwanted news, and engage their support and participation.

1. Standing up front and center. Greets the group.
2. She moves away from the front to the side of room. She holds up a copy of the directive and says, “Many of you are wondering if you need to be here for this meeting. These are directions stating that each of you must remain here today for this policies seminar.”
(-creating tangible third point).
3. She lowers the document to her side, and points to a space outside the room (-creating an invisible fourth point), “This directive was given to us from the federal level and states that attendance is nonnegotiable.”
4. She walks to an empty table away from participants and places the document down. Points to the document. (-third point) “Some of you may thinking, ‘What are we doing holding a meeting about this when you could be in classrooms getting ready for the school year?’.” “Some of you may feel frustrated and unappreciated. After all, this is a busy time and you are focused on doing your best to prepare for our students.” “ At the same time, others of you might be curious about what can be so important that we need to meet now and are anxious to explore the policies.” (-acknowledging an array of thoughts and feelings)
5. She moves to space near the front gesturing with palms up and outward, (-inviting second point), “Our job is to engage in exploring the policies as effectively and efficiently as possible so that what they have to offer may be ready applied in our work.”
6. She then moves back to front and center. Finally, she concludes by holding her palms facing her chest (-first point), and states, “My job is to help make this meeting as useful and rewarding as possible so that we all can move forward.”
7. She points to the charted agenda (-third point): “Here is today’s agenda.”

What might be some of the essential elements?

Choreograph an Acknowledge Resistance Opening

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