

# ***COMMUNITY COLLABORATION***

## **TOOLKIT FOR LEADERS: NEUTRAL FACILITATION**

A critical practice for effective dialogue in a group is neutral facilitation. In its most formal practice there are these roles:

**Facilitator** -- Neutral servant of the group, helps group focus its energies on the task, “directs traffic”.

**Recorder** -- Neutral, non-evaluating servant, publicly writes down group’s major discussion and conclusions, taking direction only from the Facilitator. Prepares “group memory” of conclusions, action plans.

**Group member** -- Active participant, devotes total energies to the task, determines the course of the meeting.

**Chairperson/Convenor** -- Participates as a group member, but with some vested “power and authority.” Typically defines the “domain” for the task..

### **FACILITATOR POINTERS**

**Clarify:** Purpose of the Dialogue  
Your Role  
Process/Timeline

**Enroll:** (1.) “Your Outcomes”  
(2.) “Your Ground Rules”

**Check:** FOR AGREEMENT (Don’t Assume)

#### **Remain Neutral**

- Content
- Personalities

“LEAVE YOUR **EGO** AT THE DOOR”

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## **TEN RULES FOR RECORDERS**

1. Serve the Facilitator.
2. Be Neutral
3. Summarize
4. Use Their Words
5. Show Agreements Clearly
6. Show Connections/Relationships
7. Be Legible, Clear
8. Be Colorful, Interesting
9. Be Graphic, as Appropriate
10. Number Pages

# **TOOLKIT FOR LEADERS: FORGING CONSENSUS**

## **DEFINITION: Consensus**

**Agreement by all to support the decision.**

## **CONSENSUS:**

Occurs when all can say (All 3!):

1. “I believe that you understand my point of view.”
2. “I believe that I understand your point of view.”
3. “Though this way may not be how I would decide by myself, I support the decision - because it was obtained in an open and fair manner.”

## **SOME GUIDELINES**

1. Effective neutral facilitation.
2. Clarity of objective for the group.
3. Use “Consensus Building” Attitudes and Techniques:
  - Assume “win/win” is possible (vs. “win/lose” required).
  - Allow (encourage?) disagreements, presented logically.
  - Avoid “conflict-Reducing” techniques: coin toss, majority vote, etc.
  - Use “Preference Illustrating” techniques: straw vote, dot voting, “fist of 5,” “passion index,” etc.

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## **TOOLKIT FOR LEADERS: FORGING CONSENSUS** **“PREFERENCE ILLUSTRATING” TECHNIQUES**

### **PURPOSE:**

- Move toward consensus
- Identify barriers to consensus
- Eliminate “no support” items

### **SOME TECHNIQUES:**

#### **-Straw Vote**

- Must be non-binding
- “Throw away” the results

#### **-Dot Voting**

- Shows “trends”
- Not “final”
- Impersonal
- Eliminates “no support” items

#### **-“Fist of 5”**

- Not “final”
- Can illustrate “strength” of commitment

#### **-“Passion Index”**

- Each person very briefly describes which option(s) they are passionate about
- Allows for sense of commitment to be experienced

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## **THE CONSENSUS CONUNDRUM**

Frequently, in community situations, consensus is desired, with these conditions:

1. **MAXIMUM DIFFERENCES REPRESENTED:** People are brought together with an intended inclusivity, to assure that all of the different perspectives in the community are represented.
2. **MINIMUM TIME SPENT:** People are involved as volunteers, on their own time. In order to assure maximum participation, time minimization is desired.
3. **HIGH DEGREE OF CONSENSUS ACHIEVED:** In order to be able to proceed with action, a consensus is desired on more than just general principles.

### **THE CONSENSUS CONUNDRUM:**

When seeking:

1. Maximum differences represented.
2. Minimum time spent.
3. High degree of consensus achieved.

**ONLY 2 OF 3 ARE POSSIBLE**

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## **SOME “PROBLEMS” WITH COMMUNITY CONSENSUS**

**Sometimes, the community consensus process suffers from:**

**1. “POLITICAL CORRECTNESS”**

A person or group invited into the community consensus process is “favored” or not dealt with honestly.

**(Action: Speak with honesty and respect)**

**2. “GROUP TALK”**

In a group process, the group members get “carried away” and commit to much more than they can, in reality, follow through on.

**(Action: Sceptically examine the group’s commitments and the schedule for meeting commitments. It is a good practice to REDUCE BY ONE-HALF THE EARLIEST COMMITMENTS, AND DEFER OTHERS IN THE SCHEDULE ACCORDINGLY)**

**3. “THE TRIP TO ABILENE”**

In the group no one is passionately committed to the plan, but most assume that someone else is passionately committed.

**(Action: Stop before finally committing and check everyone for their “PASSION” for the plan – use the “PASSION INDEX”)**

**4. “PASSIVE AGGRESSIVENESS”**

This behavior looks like “yes” – but is actually “HELL NO!” Even when apparent agreement and commitment is reached, there is little action from some, and even “sabotage”!

**(Action: ???? Beware!)**