

# Successful Facilitation: Tips and Tricks

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*UBC Summer Knowledge Share*

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# AGENDA

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- 33 Appendix: Tools & Methods

# Facilitation Overview



# What is Facilitation?

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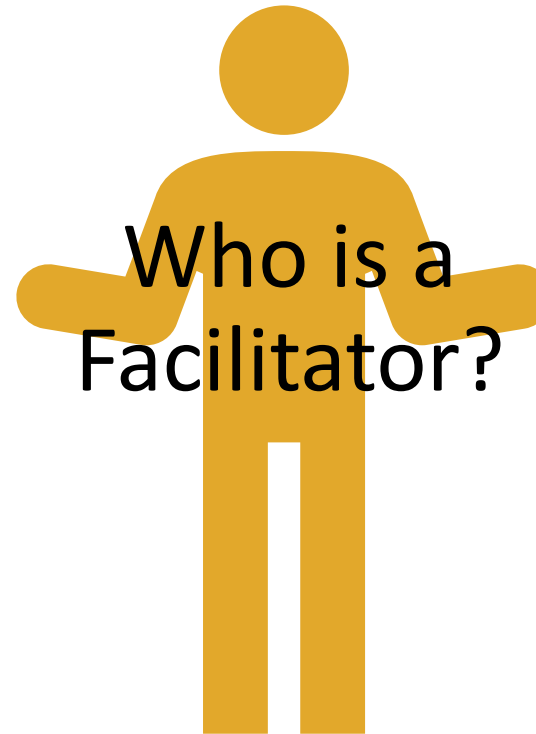
*The conscious act of guiding a meeting process to stay on course, ensure everyone participates, capture outputs, and to reach the agreed-upon meeting goals.*

The ideal Facilitator is **external** to the stakeholder group

Someone that **shapes and guides the process** of working together to meet stated goals

The Facilitator focuses on *how* to move through an agenda and meet goals effectively

A Facilitator **ensures a balanced voice** - no one should dominate the discussion and all attendees should express their thoughts



## Who is a Facilitator?

The Facilitator is not there to give opinions, but to **draw out opinions and ideas** of the group

A Facilitator remains **neutral** and never takes sides

# What Does Skilled Facilitation Look Like?

*"Like most great art forms, facilitation, when done well, looks effortless. The facilitator moves and flows and asks and listens, and hours fly by."*

Sam Killermann, author of *Unlocking the Magic of Facilitation*



# What are the Goals of Facilitation?



# A Successful Facilitator...

✓ Ensures everyone feels **comfortable** participating

✓ Ensures members feel good about their **contribution** to the meeting

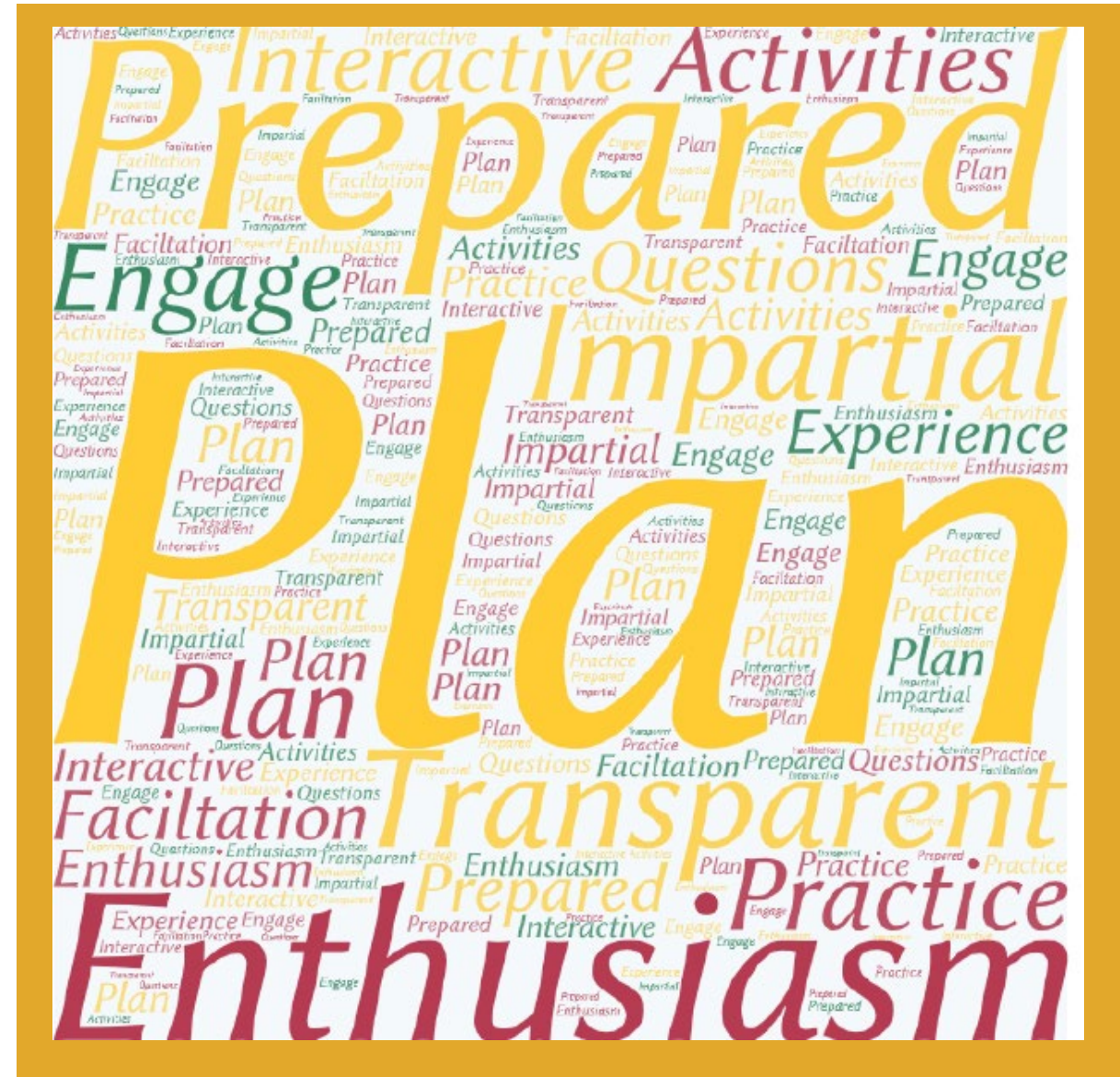
✓ Develops a **structure** that allows for everyone's ideas to be heard

✓ Ensures the members **feel the ideas and decisions are theirs**, not just the leader's or facilitator's



# Keys to Effective Facilitation

- ✓ Develop a Plan
- ✓ Be Prepared
- ✓ Show Enthusiasm
- ✓ Be Transparent
- ✓ Remain Impartial
- ✓ Plan Interactive Activities
- ✓ Engage Participants
- ✓ Focus on Posing Questions, Not Answers
- ✓ Practice and Experience



# Facilitation Planning



# Typical Facilitation Session Components

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Sponsor / Leader Kickoff – set tone and guidelines



Introductions / Ice Breakers



Agenda / Context Setting



Group Engagement



Confirm and Summarize Results and Next Steps

# Planning Questions to Answer

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What is the overall **goal** of the session?

What are the **objectives** and expected **outcomes** of sessions?

Who should ideally **attend** (stakeholder analysis)?

What **decisions** need to be made?

What **resistance** is likely? What is the plan to address?

What other **challenges** should be anticipated?

# Session Approach



## Session Format

In person, virtual, or hybrid?  
For in-person presence, what type of room and how should the location be configured (e.g., discussion tables, lecture style, technology needed)



## Other Session Roles



## Session Pre-work or Reading



## Meeting Length, Agenda and Timetable Be sure to include breaks!



## Facilitation Tools

Methods for doing introductions/ice breakers, how to manage stakeholders, generate ideas, make decisions, organize and prioritize (see Appendix for details)



## Session Materials and Tools Flipchart paper, sticky notes, markers, etc.

# Virtual Considerations

## Platforms

- Be familiar with meeting platform tools (Zoom / Teams) and how to manage participants

## Rules

- Include in Ground Rules: camera on whenever plausible, no multi-tasking

## Roles

- Assign additional meeting tech roles within your facilitation team: chat monitor, tool drivers, tech support

## Tools

- Use virtual tools: virtual whiteboard, chat, polls, breakout rooms, [Mural](#)

## Document

- Use a shared screen or a whiteboard function to display team input
- Consider recording the session for future reference

## Engage

- Give participants something to look at that is appealing
- Call on them and let them know up front you will
- Task them to do something using tool features (e.g., poll, white board, raise hand)

# Hybrid Considerations

## It's Challenging

- This is the most challenging configuration to facilitate
- Ensure in-person participants do not dominate the conversation
- Mix in-person and remote participants in break out groups

## Venue

- Select an in-person venue with technology for Hybrid Meetings
- What do remote participants need to see to fully engage? (the faces of in-room attendees, shared presentations, physical documents handed out, content created during the meeting on whiteboards or flipcharts, etc.)

## Tech

- Simulates an in-person gathering using cameras and monitors and good audio
- Virtual attendees can see their in-person counterparts and vice versa (multiple display screens with screen sharing, smart cameras and speaker systems)
- Enables anyone in the meeting to speak and be heard

# Session Roles

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## Facilitator(s)



## Sponsor



## Recorder(s)



Take detailed notes for future use

Scribe group ideas, decisions, etc., during the meeting for the group to review and consider

## Timekeeper



## Tech Role(s)



Necessary in virtual and hybrid formats

Chat monitor  
Tool Driver(s)  
Tech Support



# Facilitation Tools

## Break the Ice and Introductions

Ground Rules

Deserted Island

Fill in the Blank

So Much in Common Bingo

Stand if You...

Would You Rather – This or That

## Foster Creativity and Generate Ideas

Brainstorming

Conversation Café

SWOT Analysis

Thinking Hats

Wandering Flip Charts

## Make Decisions

Decision Matrix Analysis

Dot Voting

Fist-to-Five

Start, Stop, Continue

## Organize and Prioritize

1, 2, 4, 8...All Consensus

Small Groups

Think, Pair, Share

Who, What, When Matrix



# Group Engagement

*Tips and Tricks*

# Group Engagement

*Tips and Tricks*

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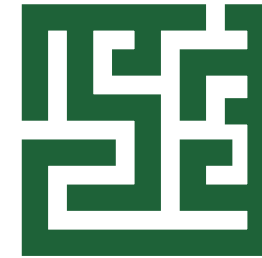
## Facilitator Techniques

Managing Participation

Ensuring Task Completion

Using Questions

Other Tips



## Difficult Situations

Types

Anticipating

Deciding to Intervene

Addressing Difficult Behaviors



# Facilitator Techniques

## *Managing Participation*

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- **Encouraging** —Being open to ideas, recognizing others
  - *"Good point, thank you for that input."*
- **Expressing Group Feelings** —Sensing moods, group dynamics, and sharing as appropriate
  - *"Looks like the group is getting tired; let's take a quick break."*
- **Harmonizing** —Reconciling disagreements, reducing tensions, getting people to explore their differences
  - *"It sounds like you see things very differently, let me share what I heard that may be areas of agreement."*
- **Setting Standards**—Expressing standards to achieve, applying standards to evaluate the group and its output, evaluating frequently
  - *"Keep in mind that we need to finish this segment in the next 15 minutes to allow time for the next part."*



# Facilitator Techniques

## *Ensuring Task Completion*

- **Clarifying**—Clearing up confusion, indicating alternatives and issues, giving examples
  - *"What do you need to resolve this item?"*
- **Consensus Testing** —Proposing tasks or goals, defining the problem, suggesting a procedure or ideas for solving the problem or achieving a goal.
  - *"It sounds like the group has identified 4 alternatives."*
- **Initiating**—Proposing tasks or goals, defining the problem, suggesting a procedure or ideas for solving the problem or achieving a goal.
  - *"What steps are needed to ..."*
- **Information Seeking** —Requesting facts, seeking relevant data about a problem, asking for suggestions or ideas
  - *"Is there an action item I can capture that will move this forward?"*
- **Summarizing** —Restating suggestions, synthesizing ideas, offering a decision of direction for the team to accept or reject.
  - *"You are suggesting we consider doing X?"*

# Facilitator Techniques

## *Using Questions*



### Overall

Direct your question to the whole group

### Direct

Address your question to a particular individual

### Return

Bounce a participant's question back to the participant

### Relay

Refer a question from one individual to another individual or the whole group

### Use Silence




Count to 10; people will fill silence

# Facilitation Techniques

## *Other Tips*

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-  Recharge batteries when needed – e.g., take a break, rearrange people/room, take a poll
-  Check in with the group – e.g., ask privately, use index cards
-  Use a parking lot – formally or “on the fly”

# Difficult Situations

*Types*



Talking off the subject and going down rabbit holes

Having side conversations

Dominating the discussion

Being constantly negative or antagonistic



Inserting personal agendas

Not engaging, paying attention, and/or multi-tasking

Presenting a hostile demeanor, criticizing, or picking an argument





# Difficult Situation Strategies

## *Anticipating*

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- Understand the **dynamics** before you facilitate
- Probe to uncover potential **challenges**
- Before the meeting, **introduce** yourself to build rapport
- Establish **Ground Rules**
- Ask for **help in advance** if you know you need it

# Difficult Situation Strategies

## *Deciding to Intervene*



- Is this a pattern?
- If I do not intervene, will another group member?
- Is the situation important enough to intervene?
- What is the best approach to intervene?



# Difficult Situation Strategies

*What to Avoid*

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Never...

- × Argue or insult anyone – even the offender
- × Get defensive
- × Express anger or frustration
- × Let non-verbal cues get away from you (e.g., roll eyes)



# Difficult Situation Strategies

## *What to Do*

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- Give people the **benefit of the doubt**
- Listen closely for the “**piece of the truth**” in each person’s expression
- Intervene **one technique** at a time
- Do not forget the **non-verbal cue** (e.g., position, eye contact, etc.)
- Link **escalation to severity**
- When all else fails:
  - Call a break and speak to the person privately
  - Ask someone else to intervene



# Difficult Situation Strategies

## *Examples*

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- Thank the person for their participation and indicate it is time to hear from others
- Politely ask the person to give someone else a chance
- Deliberately turn to others and ask for their comments; choose someone who has not yet had a chance to speak
- Interject during the person's flow of talk with a summarizing statement
- Avoid looking at the person and call on someone else
- Initiate a private discussion - Acknowledge the person's expertise or experience and ask permission to call on them for specific examples but that they should allow space for others to participate first

# Confirm and Summarize Results and Next Steps



Session summary is important to ensure all participants leave with the same understanding

- Session Results
- Next Steps
- Assigned Action Items



Ideally, the summary is part of the visible session documentation



Provides an opportunity to make any last points or take-aways

# Resources

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- Facilitation Ideas: [www.sessionlab.com](http://www.sessionlab.com) (free templates and blog for ideas)
- Virtual Whiteboards: [www.mural.com](http://www.mural.com) (includes templates such as a [workshop planning template](#)) and [Microsoft Whiteboard](#) (integrates well within GMU's Microsoft environment, especially Teams)
- Human Centered Design facilitation activities ([DesignKit.com](#) is free)
- Tips for Virtual Sessions
  - [5 Fatal Flaws With Virtual Meetings](#)
  - [How to Fix What's Wrong with Virtual Meetings](#)

[UBC Project Request Form](#)

Materials from our previous Summer Knowledge Share Sessions are on [our website](#). We look forward to seeing you next summer for our next series!

# Questions?

Email: [UBC@GMU.edu](mailto:UBC@GMU.edu)

Website: [consulting.GMU.edu](http://consulting.GMU.edu)



# Appendix: Tools & Methods



# APPENDIX: TOOLS & METHODS

- 35 Introductions and Icebreakers
- 38 Foster Creativity and Generate Ideas
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# Tools & Methods: Introduction and Ice Breakers

# Ground Rules

- **Definition**
  - Be specific and clear
  - Use no more than 10
  - Display visibly during session
  - Ideally monitored by the whole group
- **Create** for longer sessions or when this is a strategy for addressing anticipated problems
  - Have a draft list ready for suggestions and to ensure completeness
  - Co-create ground rules
  - Provide a few tailored to get ball rolling, if needed
- **Present** when session time is shorter and rules are straightforward

# Ice Breakers

- **Deserted Island**
  - Share your name, role, length of service and...
  - What would you bring and why?
- **Fill in the Blank**
  - One of my team's greatest strengths is \_\_\_\_\_
  - One book or movie you must read or watch is \_\_\_\_\_
  - One thing I do to inspire people to change is \_\_\_\_\_
  - If I had an all expenses paid vacation gifted to me I would \_\_\_\_\_
- **So Much in Common Bingo: We both....**
- **Stand if You...**
- **Would You Rather – This or That**

# Tools & Methods: Foster Creativity and Generate Ideas

# Brainstorming

- **What is it?** - A technique for generating ideas that puts a full range of ideas on the table before people take positions
- **When should you use it?**
  - To generate a free flow of creative ideas that are not bound by the usual barriers
  - To get everyone involved and create energy
- **What's the outcome?**
  - A long list of creative ideas from which to work
  - An energizing process that helps move people to take actions
  - Makes everyone feel that they're an important part of the solution

# Conversation Cafes

- **Use Powerful Questions / Topics**
  - Is simple and clear
  - Is thought provoking
  - Generates energy
  - Surfaces unconscious assumptions
  - Opens new possibilities
- **Assign Table Hosts**
  - Stay at table while "travelers" carry ideas, themes, and questions to new conversations
  - Remind people to jot down ideas, discoveries, suggestions as they emerge
  - Welcome new travelers and briefly share insights from prior tables
  - Capture key inputs and ensure conversations are summarized to share for future action
- **Process**
  - Groups of 4 or 5
  - Discuss the table question in allotted time
  - Move with your group to the next table
  - After complete rotation, share discoveries and insights



# SWOT – Example

- Name recognition
- Geographic location
- Quality education
- Rich history
- Open and supportive learning environment

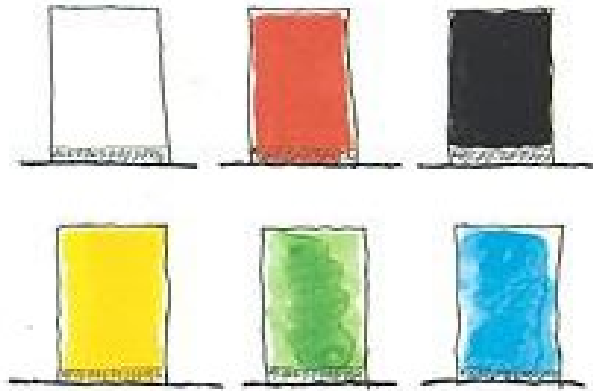


- Poor technology infrastructure
- Lack of financial aid resources
- Limited focus on philanthropic activities

- New research recruits/areas of focus
- Creating a strong brand
- Increasing philanthropy initiatives
- Local community partnerships

- Online programs taking market share
- Lack of research funding
- Local competition is increasing
- Declining demographics

# Six Thinking Hats



## SIX THINKING HATS EDWARD DE BONO

THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER  
that has changed the way the world's  
most successful business leaders think  
"WE OWE DE BONO A DEBT FOR CONSTANTLY REMINDING US THAT  
THINKING IS A SKILL AND CAN BE IMPROVED." —PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

REVISED AND UPDATED



Process

### Blue Hat

1. The Blue Hat focuses on managing the thinking process
2. Symbolises the Thinking about Thinking
3. What thinking is needed?
4. Planning for action.



Facts

### White Hat

1. White hat thinking focuses on data, facts, information known or needed
2. Neutral and objective
3. What do I know? What do I need to find out?
4. How will I get the information I need?



Creativity

### Green Hat

1. Green Hat thinking focuses on creativity
2. Symbolises Creativity
3. Ideas, Alternatives, Possibilities.
4. Solutions to 'Black Hat' problems



Feelings

### Red Hat

1. Red Hat thinking focuses on feelings, hunches, gut instinct and intuition
2. My feelings right now
3. Feelings can change
4. No reasons are given



Benefits

### Yellow Hat

1. Yellow Hat thinking focuses on values and benefits
2. Symbolises Positives, Plus Points
3. Logical reasons are given
4. Why an idea is useful



Cautions

### Black Hat

1. Black Hat thinking focuses on difficulties, potential problems, weakness
2. Why something may not work
3. Logical reasons are given
4. Spotting the risks and dangers



Resource: [Edward de Bono website](#)

# Wandering Flipcharts

Groups meet at flip chart and discuss capture your ideas



When instructed, wander clockwise to the next flipchart, read what the first group wrote



Put a star \* next to ideas you like, a ? If you don't understand, and add any additional ideas



# Tools & Methods: Make Decisions

# Decision Matrix

Make Decisions

Decision Matrix Analysis

Dot Voting

Fist-to-Five

Start, Stop, Continue

Lay out your options as rows on a table.

Set up the columns to show the factors you need to consider.

Score each choice for each factor using numbers from 0 (poor) to 5 (very good), and then allocate weights to show the importance of each of these factors.

Multiply each score by the weight of the factor, to show its contribution to the overall selection.

Add up the total scores for each option.

The highest scoring option will be the best option!

## Weighted Decision Matrix

	B	C	D	E	F	G
Importance	3	1	2	4	5	Total
Option						
Solution Option 1	3	1	5	3	1	37
Solution Option 2	1	1	1	3	5	43
Solution Option 3	1	3	3	3	3	39
Solution Option 4	5	5	3	1	1	35
Solution Option 5	5	5	5	1	1	39
Solution Option 6	1	3	1	3	1	25
Solution Option 7	5	5	3	1	5	55
Solution Option 8	5	1	3	3	5	59

$$=(B4*\$B\$2)+(C4*\$C\$2)+(D4*\$D\$2)+(E4*\$E\$2)+(F4*\$F\$2)$$

Resource: "Weighted Decision Matrix," Greg Varela, Lean Sigma Structured Problem Solving

# Dot Voting

- Each person gets X votes
- You may vote for different items or place more than one dot (or all of your dots) on one item



# Fist-to-Five

## The Fist to Five Voting Method

On the count of **1-2-3**, everyone simultaneously raises a fist with zero, 1,2,3,4 or 5 fingers extended to express how you feel about the process



**Zero Fingers (a fist)**

No way. I don't support this choice and I am vetoing it



**1 Finger**

I could go along with this, but I have an issue or concern that I'd like to resolve first.



**2 Fingers**

I'm willing to try this. Any concerns of mine are minor and I don't need to discuss them.



**3 Fingers**

I can support the idea



**4 Fingers**

I like the idea. It works for me.



**5 Fingers**

This is the best idea ever! It would be my first choice. AWESOME!

# Start, Stop, Continue

- Use a matrix with 3 columns: Start, Stop, and Continue
- As a group, small groups, or individuals, add items to each column

## START

*“What should we/  
start doing?”*

List ideas/items:

- Things that are not being done, but should be done
- Things to begin doing to get better results
- Things worth trying or experimenting for better results

## STOP

*“What should we/  
stop doing?”*

List ideas/items:

- Things that are not working or helping
- Things that impede or are not practical
- Not delivering desired results
- We or others dislike

## CONTINUE

*“What should we/  
continue doing?”*

List ideas/items:

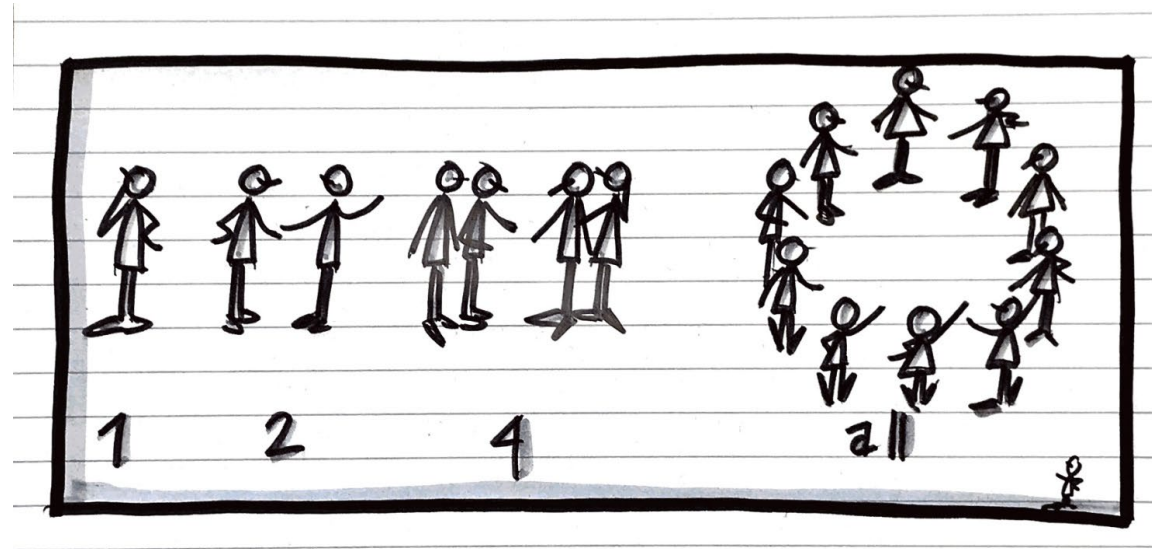
- Things that are working well
- Things that we want to keep
- Worth continuing to see if they're worthwhile
- We like or need



# Tools & Methods: Organize and Prioritize

# 1,2,4,8...All Consensus

- Individually or as a group, generate possible ideas / alternatives
- Review list of ideas/alternatives
- Form pairs and prioritize to identify top 3
- Pairs then come to form a group of 4 and prioritize and agree on a joint top 3
- Each group of 4 comes together with another to form a group of 8. Again, each group takes its 2 lists of priorities and reduces it to one list of 3
- Repeat until the whole group has come back together and has a shared list of just 3 priorities



# Small Groups

In small groups, discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

Choose a **scribe** who will represent your group during the debrief

Be prepared to discuss the following questions during **debrief**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_?
2. \_\_\_\_\_?



# Think, Pair, Share

Organize and Prioritize

1, 2, 4, 8...All Consensus

Small Groups

Think, Pair, Share

Who, What, When Matrix

## Think

Take X minutes to capture your ideas

Write them down

## Pair




For the next Y minutes, discuss your ideas with a partner

Agree on priority ideas

## Share

Share priority ideas with the group

# Who, What, When Matrix

WHO 	WHAT 	WHEN 
Pat	Example of task	12/5/18
Chris	Example of task	ASAP