Facilitation Basics

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NOAA Office for Coastal Management

“Coastal management” is the term used by communities and organizations striving to keep the nation’s coasts safe from storms, rich in natural resources, and economically strong. The national lead for these efforts is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office for Coastal Management, an organization devoted to partnerships, science, and good policy. This agency, housed within the National Ocean Service, oversees major initiatives that include the National Coastal Zone Management Program, Coral Reef Conservation Program, Digital Coast, and National Estuarine Research Reserve System.

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Trainers

Ann Weaver (*Ann.Weaver@noaa.gov*) is a program and training specialist at NOAA's Office for Coastal Management. Her responsibilities include conducting trainings that include Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings, Project Design and Evaluation, and Planning for Meaningful Evaluation. Weaver was certified as a professional facilitator by the International Association of Facilitators in April 2011. Before coming to the Office for Coastal Management, she worked as the coastal training program coordinator at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, where she coordinated the completion of a market analysis and needs assessment for the program.

Weaver has extensive experience as a trainer and facilitator in the public and private sectors. As an industrial engineer in a manufacturing venue, she focused on process skills. She used her expertise in processes to teach those skills to other engineers and manufacturing associates as the continuous improvement coordinator. This led her to become a corporate-certified learning specialist and instructional designer, where she conducted needs assessments, designed and facilitated courses, and coached multifunctional project groups through a six sigma problem solving process. When she completed her master's degree, she left the private sector to apply her training skills and education to resource management.

Weaver obtained her bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Washington, and a bachelor's and master's degree in biology from Florida Atlantic University.

Marian Hanisko (*Marian.Hanisko@noaa.gov*) joined the NOAA Office for Coastal Management in 2010 as a coastal management specialist with The Baldwin Group. In this position, she teaches Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings and works with federal, state, and local partners to address community resilience and climate change adaptation planning issues.

Hanisko has over ten years of experience in coastal management and policy with a special emphasis in workshop design, meeting planning, and facilitation. Previously, she served as the coastal training program coordinator at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Moss Point, Mississippi, where she designed and hosted training workshops for natural resource managers and local elected officials.

Hanisko holds a master of science in environmental studies from the University of Charleston and a bachelor of science in biology from Samford University.

Jan Kucklick (*Jan.Kucklick@noaa.gov*) joined the NOAA Office for Coastal Management in June 1997 as a coastal management specialist, and her courses include Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings.

Kucklick has been working in the field of coastal and marine science since 1989. She has extensive experience in facilitation and conference and meeting coordination and management, and while at the Office for Coastal Management, has served as an outreach manager, program coordinator, and operational manager. Before joining the office, she worked in the area of oil spill response, damage assessment, and contingency planning. Kucklick holds a master of science in marine biology from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and a bachelor of science in biology from the College of William and Mary.

Gwen Shaughnessy (*Gwen.Shaughnessy@noaa.gov*) joined the NOAA Office for Coastal Management in February 2011 as a climate adaptation specialist.

In this position, Shaughnessy helps NOAA build capacity that enables local communities to better understand the risks, strategies, and choices for how to adapt to the impacts of hazards and a changing climate.

Previously, Shaughnessy worked for four years as a coastal hazards and climate change specialist for the Maryland Chesapeake and Coastal Program. From 2007 to 2008, she helped staff the Adaptation and Response Working Group for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and contributed to Maryland's Climate Action Plan. Her responsibilities also included development of the CoastSmart Communities Initiative, a program designed to improve community resilience in the face of coastal hazards and climate change. Shaughnessy holds a bachelor of science degree in marine biology from California State University at Long Beach and a master's degree in marine science from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Guest Trainers:

Jennifer West (*jennifer@nbnerr.org*) has been the coastal training program coordinator with the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve since 2005. Her primary responsibility is the development and delivery of training events and technical assistance programs for municipal officials and other decision-maker audiences on topics related to water quality, habitat protection, and climate change. She also provides facilitation assistance to a variety of groups, from municipal advisory committees vetting and adopting new zoning ordinances to strategic planning for conservation groups. West has conducted numerous needs assessments, market analyses, and program evaluations and has expertise in planning and implementing collaborative methods and stakeholder engagement techniques.

Before her current position with the reserve, West worked as an environmental educator for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, was a marine and environmental teaching fellow through the University of Rhode Island (URI) Graduate School of Oceanography's Office of Marine Programs, and held positions at Rhode Island Sea Grant/URI Coastal Resources Center and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. West holds a master of science in environmental sciences from the University of Rhode Island and a bachelor of science in environmental biology from the State University of New York College at Oneonta.

Dr. Christine Feurt works on the coast of Maine where she is the director of the coastal training program for the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve and director of the Center for Sustainable Communities in the Department of Environmental Studies at the University of New England. Her work focuses on applying collaborative learning and other environmental communication methods to implement community-based ecosystem management and a sustainability science approach to solutions-oriented research. She works with coastal managers, government officials, nongovernmental organizations, fellow scientists, and outreach professionals to design and implement collaborative stakeholder processes where people work together to make progress on shared goals. Working with partners, she applies the collaborative learning approach to source water protection, conservation, land use planning, planning for climate resilience, and ecosystem service valuation. Feurt's research and experience using collaborative learning to address coastal management challenges has been synthesized for practitioners in the Collaborative Learning Guide for Ecosystem-based Managemen (*http://dune.une.edu/env_facpubs/15/*) and in a training course, Working Together to Get Things Done (*http://dune.une.edu/env_facpubs/13/*).

During her career, Feurt has worked as a coastal ecologist, educator, and natural resource manager in national parks, wildlife refuges, universities, and coastal communities across North America. In 2007 she earned her Ph.D. in environmental studies from Antioch University New England. Her dissertation research developed an interdisciplinary method for applying collaborative learning to the practice of community-based ecosystem management.

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Introduction

In today's world, resource management professionals are often involved in meetings that address controversial issues. When diverse groups work on contentious issues, it is essential to minimize conflict and deal constructively with that conflict when it occurs. Managing a meeting that reduces conflict, enhances cooperation among stakeholders, and achieves its objectives in a timely manner is the goal, and this training is organized to demonstrate a collaborative process to help achieve that end.

Collaboration is often cited as a good way to address coastal resource management issues, but the collaborative process is complicated, requiring a systematic approach. This course provides the skills and tools to design and implement collaborative approaches, whether one is embarking on a multi-year, multi-stakeholder process or planning a weekly team meeting. The skills will be useful even when attending, but not running, a collaborative meeting.

The workbook is organized in three sections. The first section will cover the six steps of the collaborative process and useful information to assist with the process for each step. The second section will cover the facilitation skills necessary to run the collaborative process and individual meetings. These skills are woven throughout the process and the training, and are organized separately in the workbook for convenience and future reference. The third section presents tools that, again, can be used throughout the process and at individual meetings. References and job aids are included at the end of the workbook.

Section 1 – Meeting Planning

What Kind of Meeting Do You Need?

When asked to collaborate, it is productive to ask how much collaboration is necessary. A collaborative process engages multiple stakeholders in cooperative deliberations in order to address issues and solve problems. The issues addressed may be internal to organizations or in the public arena. The collaborative process often improves the relationship of involved parties, encourages high quality input, and aids in the construction of mutually acceptable agreements. Public agencies use collaborative processes to build consensus and gain strong support for proposed solutions to public issues.

When collaborative processes are conducted properly, participants obtain a clear understanding of the issue and have analyzed all relevant facts together—before jointly developing solutions that represent the whole group's best thinking about the optimal decision. A consensus decision is reached when everyone says, "I can live with this decision, and I will support its implementation." A collaborative process should be designed to get to this point—even if the consensus is that the group agrees to use one of the other decision-making methods to reach the final agreement.

Decision-Making Continuum

Meetings have many different purposes. Problem-solving and decision-making meetings may or may not need to be collaborative. Before engaging in a collaborative process, it is important to decide who will make the decisions, and how the outcome will be implemented. Once these matters have been decided, the information needs to be communicated to the stakeholders and the public so that all affected parties understand their roles. The decision-making continuum, shown in Figure 1, demonstrates who makes decisions and how decisions in the public sector might be made.

- **Inform:** These are the most straightforward meetings where one member communicates information or a decision that interests or affects the participants. This meeting is not collaborative.
- **Consult:** In this type meeting, the organizer or agency gathers input from stakeholders and makes the decision considering the input, or *not*. This meeting can be collaborative if the input is considered in the decision.
- **Discuss:** In this meeting, the organizer or agency discusses the issue with the stakeholders and works with them to find solutions. The organizer or agency will then use the input to develop and implement the solutions. This meeting may be collaborative if the discussions inform the final decisions.
- **Collaborate:** This is the most difficult type meeting, requiring that decisions be reached collaboratively, and implementation be a part of the process. The agency or organizer may delegate authority to the stakeholders, allowing them to conduct the collaborative process, and develop and implement the plan. The agency may have a seat at the table, but is considered an equal partner in the development and implementation of the solution. In some cases, the agency will hire a consulting company to conduct and implement the collaborative process.

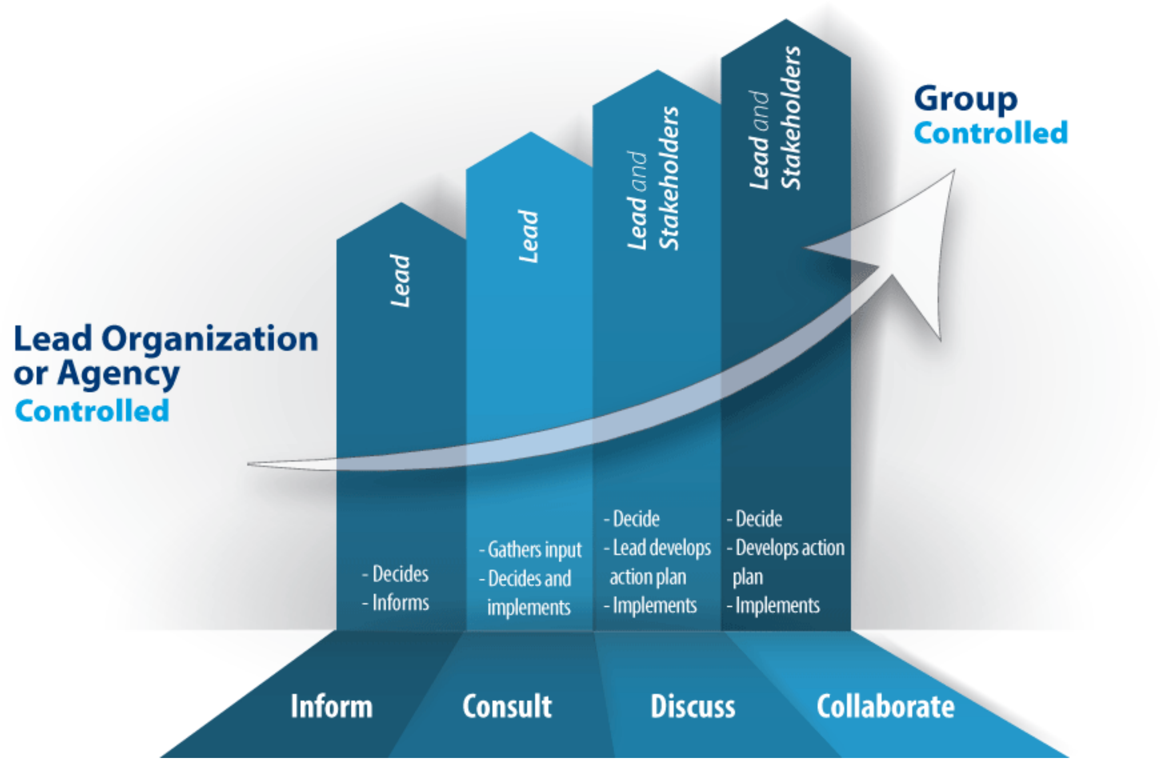


Figure 1: Decision-making continuum

Most of the collaborative processes embarked upon by agencies are "Consult" or "Discuss" processes. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide input, and the input is used to a greater or lesser degree. Ensuring that stakeholders understand how the input will be used is central to minimizing contention.

No matter where your process may fall on the decision-making continuum, managing stakeholder expectations is critical. When conducting a participatory process, the sponsoring agency must clearly explain from the onset how much influence participants have and exactly how participant input will be used in decision-making. Differing perceptions between participants and sponsoring agencies on participant control of the outcome can lead to poor public acceptance of the outcome and loss of public support for the agency. Being transparent about the process used to make the decisions is also critical.

Processes Used for Decision-Making

Choosing the most appropriate method before each decision-making session is an important part of the process.

Spontaneous Agreement

Occasionally, one solution is favored by everyone. These types of decisions are fairly rare and often occur with simple issues.

Pros: It's fast and easy. It unites the group, and there is no conflict.
Cons: It may be too fast; the issue may actually need discussion.
Uses: When issues are trivial and discussion isn't vital. When issues are simple and an in-depth discussion isn't required.

One Person (or Subcommittee) Decides

The group decides to defer to one person who will make the decision on behalf of the group. Teams should recognize that every decision doesn't need to be made by the group; a one-person decision is often a faster and more efficient way to get resolution. The decision maker can—and should—get advice and input from other group members before deciding.

Pros: It's fast, and accountability is clear.
Cons: The decision may not have the support necessary to implement it if the constituents don't respect or trust the person (or subcommittee) making the decision.
Uses: When the issue is unimportant or small, there's a clear expert in the group, when only one person has access to the information needed to make the decision, or when one person is solely accountable for the outcome.

Compromise
A middle position is created (or negotiated) by incorporating ideas from both sides—either by finding a compromise when members are strongly polarized on opposite sides of a single option or by blending different ideas when multiple options exist. Because every side wins some points and loses others, the result is one that no one is totally satisfied with.

Pros: It generates lots of discussion and creates a solution.
Cons: It tends to become adversarial when people have a favored point of view. Everyone wins AND everyone loses.
Uses: When neither of two opposing solutions is acceptable to everyone or the group is highly polarized.

Multi-voting
This is a priority-setting tool that is useful when a lengthy set of options exists. This allows the options to be ranked based on a set of criteria so that the "best" options can be identified.

Pros: It's systematic, objective, democratic, noncompetitive, and participative. It minimizes feelings of loss. It is a fast way to sort through a complex set of options.
Cons: It's often associated with limited discussion and, therefore, limited understanding of options. It may force people to choose an unsatisfactory option, because it appeared to be the best there was at the time (that is, all issues may not have been raised during the limited discussion).
Uses: When there's a long list of alternatives or items from which to choose or prioritizing a list of items.

Majority Voting
This method is used when clear choices have been identified; people must choose the option they favor. Detailed discussion and analysis of the options before voting always enhances the quality of the vote.

Pros: It's fast, and high-quality decisions may result if the vote occurs after a thorough discussion.
Cons: It can be too fast; if there isn't a thorough discussion, the quality of the decision may be low. It can create winners and losers, and create competition between these groups. Asking for a "show of hands" may put pressure on people to conform.
Uses: When there are two distinct options and one or the other must be chosen, and when decisions are needed quickly.

Consensus
Consensus seeks the consent of all participants. This method strives to reach an acceptable resolution, one that can be supported, even if not the "favorite" of each individual.

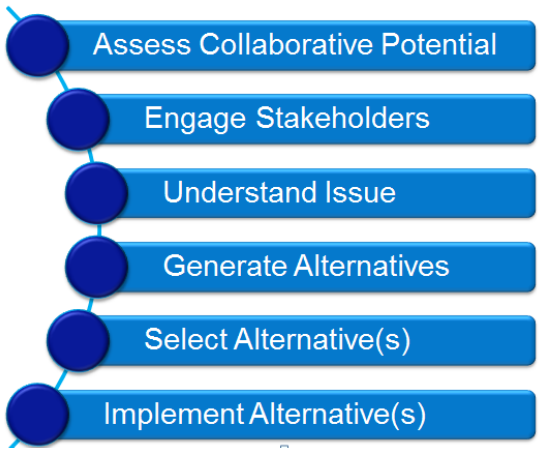
Pros: It's an inclusive effort that unites the group, and it demands high involvement. It is systematic, objective, and fact-driven. It builds buy-in and commitment to the outcome.

Cons: It's time-consuming. It can produce low-quality decisions if it is done without proper data or information collection, or if members have poor interpersonal skills.
Uses: When the decision will impact the entire group and buy-in is essential. When the importance of the decision is worth the time it will take to complete the collaborative process properly.

Collaborative Process Framework

The following steps provide a systematic structure for problem-solving and decision-making processes, where the support of all participants is important for the success of the solution's implementation. This consensual process provides a solid foundation for any group seeking to resolve important issues. This manual and the training are organized around this framework. When embarking on a collaborative process, it can be useful to think in terms of steps to be taken.

The Collaborative Process



Step I: Assess Collaborative Potential – organizers determine if a collaborative process is the best way to resolve the issue.

Step 2: Engage Stakeholders – organizers analyze the stakeholders that will need to be engaged to build support for the project.

Step 3: Understand the Issue – representatives of the stakeholders discuss and understand the diverse perspectives on the issue.

Step 4: Generate Alternatives – representatives of the stakeholders generate several alternative methods to resolve the issue.

Step 5: Select Alternatives – alternatives are evaluated and prioritized.

Step 6: Implement Alternatives – selected alternatives are implemented.

It is the first two steps in this process that set it apart from the standard problem solving and decision making processes. Assessing the need for collaboration, and engaging the stakeholders is what makes this standard process collaborative.

Most coastal resource professionals know that facilitated, collaborative processes can be useful in a variety of situations—from project planning to the development of resource management plans and strategies. Not all issues, however, can be solved using a collaborative process. Thinking through the issue and the stakeholders can prevent a false start down a path that will not work.

When to Use a Collaborative Process

- Issues are complex
- Many parties are affected
- There is a great deal to be lost or gained by some stakeholder groups
- No single agency has clear or complete jurisdiction
- No single agency has the resources and expertise to develop and implement a solution
- No clear solution is evident
- Issues are negotiable
- Parties are willing to negotiate

When Not to Use a Collaborative Process

- Level of concern over the issue is not great
- Basic values or principles are the focus of the problem
- Extreme polarization prohibits face-to-face discussion
- Time is not sufficient
- Quick action is required
- Funding for implementation is not available
- Timing is not right for the stakeholders or the political environment
- Relevant information is not available
- Legal clarification is needed

Meeting Roles

Understanding and acknowledging the roles participants will play during a meeting allows everyone to prepare in advance, leading to a more efficient and effective outcome. This training will focus on the facilitator role, a role that is essential for the success of the collaborative process. Each of the following roles may be important depending on the type and the objective of the meeting you are planning.

Facilitator

The facilitator contributes structure and *process* (that is, the design of the meetings) to interactions so that groups are able to function effectively and make high-quality decisions. The facilitator has no stake in the issue and is trusted by all parties to be neutral on the outcome. A facilitator uses the process and delivery to support others and enable them to achieve their goals (related to the content). The facilitator moves the meeting along and keeps it focused. Learning to facilitate meetings is a valuable skill. “Facilitation Skills” can be found in Section 2 of this workbook.

Leader

The group leader serves as a team captain in meetings; the leader is often a content expert. Often, the leader provides meeting direction: purpose, goals and objectives, and desired outcomes or outputs. Typically, the leader convenes the meeting and is accountable for the outcome.

Facilitating Leader
This is a difficult role given that the facilitator has no stake in the issue, and the leader is often a subject matter expert on the issue. When a leader is in the position of facilitator, that leader must find a balance that is appropriate for the situation or topic under discussion. In this dual role, the facilitating leader is not necessarily neutral on the issue; however, he or she must still follow all of the facilitation practices described in this workshop to promote effectiveness in meetings and progress toward achieving the group's goals and objectives.

Recorder
The recorder documents the meeting: the process, decisions, actions taken (or to be taken), and outcomes. The recorder also documents the following implementation of any action plan that is established in the meeting. Documenting the information discussed without introducing bias in the notes is an important task for this role. Maintaining neutrality and trust will help with the process when participants perceive the process as fair.

Participants
The participants provide input, discussion, and feedback on the topics at hand (*content*) and on the process. Ensuring that the right decision makers and experts are present is an important planning step.

Process Observer
The process observer provides feedback to the facilitator and the team leader on the process to help fine-tune it. During the meeting, the observer may assess the process by asking questions such as—Is the pace appropriate? Are all participants involved? What roles are various participants playing? Are the decision-making tools appropriate?

Strategies for Managing Meetings

Managing Time
Time limits are an essential part of well-run meetings. Although time limits can create nervousness or anxiety, participants will appreciate starting and ending on time more than they will resent the pressure of time limits.

- Ensure that each activity on the agenda is given a specific amount of time and that the time is adequate to address the issue.
- Establish time limits for speakers, discussion, and less structured activities.
- Appoint a timekeeper and give that person authority to stop people when their time is up. Give people ample warning before stopping them—using a "30-second sign" or other some other signal—so that they can wrap up their point.
- Have a clock that is visible to both you and the participants. Clocks with timers and alarms work especially well for this. At first, participants will find it distracting or annoying. However, after a few meetings that finish on time, the participants will learn to watch the clock, stay focused, and work within the established time limits.
- Practice! Whether you are the trainer, facilitator, or leader, practicing your part before the meeting will help you to get a feel for how long different activities take.
- Keep flexibility in mind when planning. As the facilitator or leader, know ahead of time what agenda items can be put off to another meeting, decided quickly, or delegated to a participant

or subcommittee to decide. Pre-meeting preparation is the key to knowing what topics must be covered immediately and what can be postponed, and it will allow you to tweak your agenda on the fly during a meeting.

Coordinate with the Conveners

- Agree on the primary goal of the meeting.
- Determine what tasks need to be accomplished in this meeting.
- Develop a list of issues to discuss.
- Determine what issues need to be resolved at the meeting.
- Determine how to resolve any issues.
- Ensure that the appropriate people will be present to finalize decisions or make commitments to implement meeting results.

Logistical Details

- Determine where the meeting will be held.
- Consider the kind of space, furniture, wall space (if needed), lighting, public address system, and acoustics the site has.
- Arrange for food and beverages for meetings over 4 hours if possible.
- Arrange for any necessary equipment (projector, computer, wireless, easels, etc.)

Meeting Detail Checklist for the Facilitator

This checklist is a guide to clarify meeting details for the facilitator.

- Will I be able to maintain neutrality?
- Will the participants consider me neutral and trust me to fairly facilitate the meeting?
- Who is organizing the meeting?
- What is the meeting's purpose?
- What do the organizers want as a result of this meeting?
- What is the history behind convening this meeting?
- What are the history, makeup, and relationships of the group?
- What is the expected size of the group?
- Who will be affected by decisions made by the group?
- Are there any underlying situations or problems that I, as facilitator, need to be aware of?
- Will any of the topics be highly contentious or difficult for participants to discuss?
- What is the time frame for preparing and conducting the meeting?
- If there will be a series of meetings to address the issue, what is the time frame for the entire process?
- What are the logistical arrangements for the meeting?
- Is it clear what I am responsible for (e.g., process design, agenda preparation, meeting summary, or facilitation)?
- What are the limitations or boundaries of my authority over the meeting?
- Is it clear who is in charge of other responsibilities (e.g., logistics, communication, background materials, or recording)?
- Will the group evaluate the meeting to assess its progress or the facilitator's performance?

Meeting Responsibilities

These are some examples that can be used to clarify roles when working with a facilitator or a meeting convener.

Facilitator Responsibilities

- Ensure an understanding of and a process to reach meeting objectives and outcomes.
- Review and make recommendations about the expected audience.
- Discuss any group dynamic issues that need to be considered.
- Suggest process tools to assist the audience in reaching meeting objectives.
- Provide a draft process agenda for the host to review, and modify as necessary.
- Provide a final process agenda and audience agenda before the event.

Requestor Responsibilities

- Reserve and pay for all costs for the facilities necessary for the successful completion of the workshop or meeting (sufficient size, appropriate lighting, tables, and seating for participants and facilitators, and accessible electrical outlets), including accommodations for language translation or special needs participants, if required.
- Provide travel assistance for the facilitator, if necessary.
- Create and send out invitations to potential participants and handle the registration process, if applicable.
- Greet participants and provide them with a name badge. Orient the participants to the site and make them aware of emergency procedures, restroom locations, and any security procedures they should follow during the meeting. A brief time for the local host to present this information will be the first item on the process agenda.
- Provide the facilitators with hotel recommendations and obtain a block of hotel rooms for participants, if appropriate.
- Arrange for refreshments during break and lunch.
- Provide supplies as needed, e.g., an LCD projector, screen, self-sticking flip chart pads and easels, multi-colored dot stickers, index cards, flip chart markers, and tape approved for walls.

Requestor and Facilitator Shared Responsibilities

- Develop explicit objectives for the event.
- Agree upon workshop outputs.
- Develop a detailed process agenda.
- Discuss all logistics, including room setup, supplies, and audio-visual equipment.
- Develop a list of appropriate participants.
- Identify who will fill what roles during the meeting (e.g., note takers, facilitators).
- Discuss project history, participant relationships, and issues that may arise during the event.
- Develop an action plan for follow-up activities after the event, including any transcribing of notes and writing of summary documents.
- Recruit additional small-group facilitators if the meeting process includes breakout groups.

Selecting a Facilitator

The following are some traits to consider when selecting an outside facilitator:

Confidence
The facilitator must be someone the participants will trust and believe. The facilitator should be confident and competent in his or her ability, and the participants should be confident and comfortable with the facilitator. It is important that all parties trust the facilitator to serve in a neutral capacity with regard to the process—even if the facilitator is employed by an agency or organization that has a stake or position in the situation.

Positive Attitude
The facilitator should be open-minded and expect the meeting to be successful.

Effective Listener
The facilitator must be able to give his or her full attention to the meeting and be able to clarify and confirm what transpires. Although the facilitator does not have to be a subject expert on the meeting content, it is helpful if he or she is familiar with the terminology, concepts, and ideas related to the topic that will be discussed.

Coaching Ability
The facilitator should possess strong observational skills. He or she should be comfortable giving direction, feedback, and meaningful suggestions for improvement.

Enthusiasm
A good facilitator has visible energy and intensity, good movement, and a strong voice. It should be obvious to participants that the facilitator wants to lead the meeting and make progress toward achieving the group's goals.

Action-Oriented
The facilitator should be prepared to step in and take charge if the meeting begins to lag. A good facilitator is flexible enough to keep a meeting moving at a good pace—even if there are sudden changes in the direction the group is taking.

Good Organizational Skills
The facilitator must be able to maintain control of the meeting, stay on key points, and make effective use of the meeting space, time, and tools (flip charts, audio-visual equipment, etc.).

Collaborative Step 1 – Assess Collaborative Potential

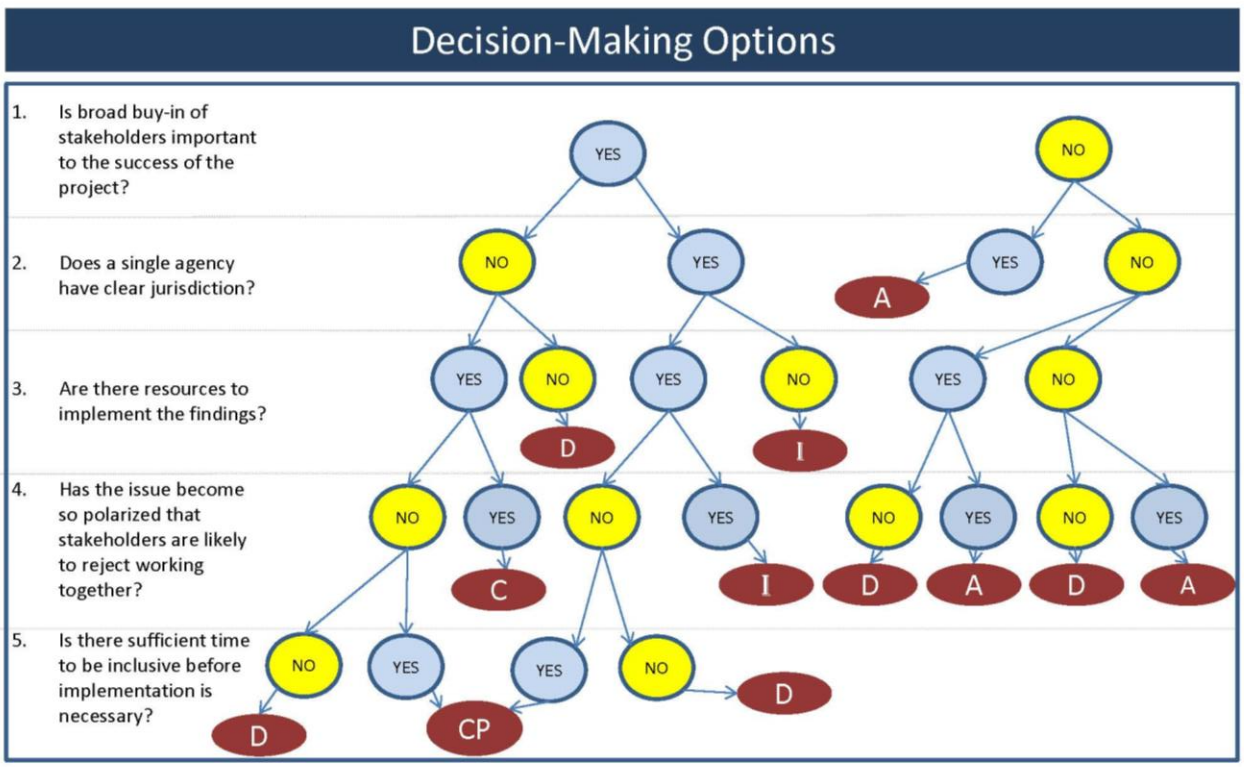
Is a Collaborative Process a Viable Option?

Once an agency determines that it wants input from stakeholders and the public on an issue, that agency should ask a series of questions to determine the best method to resolve the issue.

1. **Is broad buy-in of stakeholders important to the success of the project?** If implementation of the solution will cause stakeholders to lose something valuable to them, it may be important to give them an opportunity to understand why the solution was chosen, and even better to give them an opportunity to participate in the development of the solution. If stakeholders have no ground to lose, and no one really cares about the issue, then there is no reason to spend the time and resources required to conduct a collaborative process.
2. **Does a single agency have clear jurisdiction?** If one agency has clear jurisdiction over the issue, the agency may decide to conduct a collaborative process or implement solutions without input. If multiple agencies are involved, collaboration will be necessary between the agencies, and they may choose to invite stakeholders as well.
3. **Are resources available to implement the findings?** This question can be difficult to answer without understanding what the solution may be, but placing a budget on the solutions is a reasonable boundary for the process. If there is no budget to resolve the issue, a consultation or discussion may be a better method to determine what to do. Conducting a collaborative process to recommend a solution takes much time and effort, and participants will be disillusioned if the proposed solution is not implemented.
4. **Has the issue become so polarized that stakeholders are likely to reject working together?** If the issue has a longstanding history of conflict, collaboration is not the answer. Collaborative processes require the stakeholders to be willing to work together to solve the issue. Issues that are based on value systems cannot be solved collaboratively.
5. **Is there sufficient time to be inclusive before implementation is necessary?** Collaborative processes take a great deal of time: months to years. If implementation of the solution needs to be done quickly, as in the case of an emergency, collaboration is not the answer.

Decision-Making Options

A decision-making options tree can be used to determine what meeting type will be most effective for the issue in question. With the questions described above and listed in the left-hand column, users should think about the issue they are working on, and answer as honestly as they can. Answers will lead by arrow to the next question and answer down the page, and so forth. The five ways to resolve the issue were discussed earlier and are listed at the bottom of the tree. Each path will lead to one of those meeting types. Thoughtful planning and facilitation skills are necessary for each of these meetings, and they become more important as more stakeholders are added to the decision. A collaborative process is a good way to resolve the issue if the answer to question 5 leads the to the “CP” circle.



Authority (A) – Autocrat uses existing information
Inform (I) – A decision that interests or affects stakeholders is communicated
Consult (C) – The agency gathers input from stakeholders and makes the decision considering the input, or *not*
Discuss (D) – The agency discusses the issue with the stakeholders and works with them to find solutions
Collaborate (CP) – Decisions are reached collaboratively, by following a process

Figure 2: Decision-making options

Collaborative Step 2 – Engage Stakeholders In the Collaborative Process

Analyze the Stakeholders

Introduction to Stakeholder Participation, the NOAA Office for Coastal Management publication which can be found here, https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/stakeholder.html, provides information and job aids to assist with the selection of the appropriate stakeholders. The public's attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge can have a profound effect on the success of coastal resource management. While science can serve as a rational foundation for management, in many cases it is those groups impacted by resource management decisions that decide how acceptable a decision is and influence how effective the management will be. Peoples' experiences and culture, understanding of an issue, and support of an agency can shape their support for and compliance with coastal resource management decisions and policies.

Involving stakeholders in natural resource management decisions can accomplish the following:

- Produce better outcomes or decisions
- Garner public support for agencies and their decisions
- Bring to light important local knowledge about natural resources
- Increase public understanding of natural resource issues or management decisions
- Reduce or resolve conflicts between stakeholders
- Ensure implementation of new programs or policies
- Increase compliance with natural resource laws and regulations
- Help agencies understand flaws in existing management strategies
- Create new relationships among stakeholders

Practitioners of stakeholder participation will jokingly define a stakeholder as "anybody who wants to be." There is much truth to this broad definition. Stakeholders are generally those who have an interest in or are affected by a decision. Stakeholders are also those who have influence or power in a situation. Stakeholders' interests in an issue can be monetary, professional, personal, or cultural, and can arise from a host of other motivations.

But knowing stakeholder categories doesn't always help identify the stakeholders for a given issue or resource. For example, broadly identifying stakeholders in the health of the nation's coasts is particularly formidable because of the seemingly endless list of people who use coastal resources, either directly or indirectly.

Understanding Positions versus Interests

When working with a group of stakeholders with varying perspectives, understanding that each participant brings positions and interests to the table assists the facilitator in planning for the meetings.

Issue -An issue is a topic to be addressed by participants in a negotiation or problem-solving process.

Interest -An interest is a participant's underlying need or concern, which is important to a satisfactory outcome on a given issue.

Position -A position identifies one way to meet the underlying interest. Reframing the question to address the interest can help to advance the problem-solving process.

Once the facilitator understands the positions and interests each party brings, a general understanding of conflict can help guide the meeting planning and process.

Understanding Controversy and Conflict

Conflict = Danger + Opportunity

This old Chinese proverb is right. The Chinese word for "crisis" or "conflict" is made from the symbols for danger and opportunity. While conflict traditionally has a negative connotation, it is a natural—and sometimes desirable—social process. There is a risk that conflict will drive individuals and groups apart, but the opportunity to create new solutions for dealing with problems can move society forward.

The Opportunity – Positive Outcomes of Conflict
Produce better ideas
Search for new approaches
Resolve long-standing problems
Force people to clarify their views
Yield creativity and interest

The Danger – Negative Outcomes of Conflict
Feel defeated or insulted
Increase distance between individuals or groups
Increase distrust or suspicion
Promote self-interest
Develop resistance, rather than teamwork and cooperation

Key Strategies for Conflict Management
Bring conflicts out into the open
Reach positive, productive resolutions to conflict
Develop honest, forthright, positive relationships with others

Causes of Conflict
Competition causes conflict when one person or group tries to beat another, and the others defend themselves.

Another common cause of conflict is lack of respect. Failing to appreciate or understand the experiences or views of another can escalate conflict.

Emotions can escalate the conflict when people stop communicating, and hold tight to their positions.

Diverse understandings of the problem can cause conflict. Misinformation, misconceptions, and false perceptions can escalate conflict by driving wedges between individuals and groups.

An individual's experiences shape a distinct set of morals and priorities, which may lead to conflict when these experiences differ from those of others.

The Nature of Conflict

Six primary areas of disagreement serve as sources of conflict.

Facts and Data

Having objective, reliable information is important. Different data sources, assessment methods, or interpretations can be a beginning point of conflict and lead to a battle of the experts. Beware of rumors, misinformation, and assumptions that may accelerate conflict in this area.

Goals and Interests

Understanding the goal of the meeting and an understanding of the issue is key to reducing conflict. Different parties may have different interests and objectives, which can cause conflict.

Relationships and Structures

If a relationship between parties is marred by distrust, conflict may be difficult to avoid or overcome—especially where parties see themselves as competition for limited resources.

Methods and Procedures

Even when parties agree on goals, they may disagree on the strategies for achieving those goals.

Values

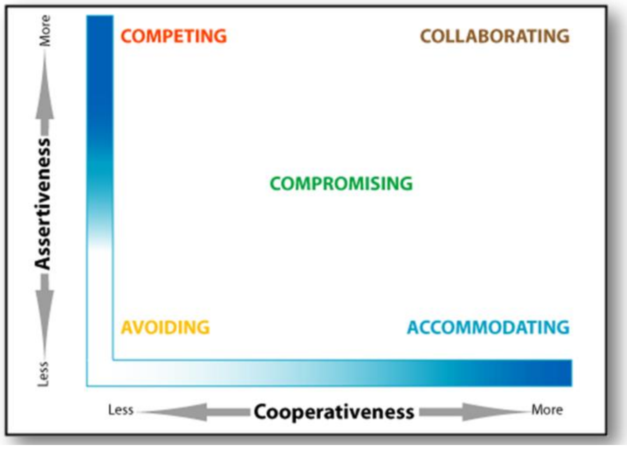
Parties have more intense conflict when the contested issue affects core values. Moral issues are unlikely to welcome compromise.

Sticks and Stones

The old adage says that sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt you. However, this is not always true. Certain words may actually escalate conflict, especially considering the **tone** and **context** with which they are used. Some words to avoid include:

You
But
Can't
Always
Never
Should have
Ought to have

Conflict Styles



(adapted from Blake and others 1987)

Compete
Just do it! Life is a sport and there will be winners and losers. Go all out to win, even at the expense of others! You know what you want, why it's important, how to win, and what will happen to the loser.
When to use: When setting precedent or when basic rights are at stake.

Compromise
It's time to settle. You don't want to risk a complete loss from the win-lose scenario, so settle for what you can live with. Sharing in the victory can make sense when you care about your concerns and the concerns of the other party.
When to use: When your goals are only moderately important, when temporary settlements are needed, when fast solutions are required, or when destructive power struggles need to be avoided.

Collaborate
Working together, each party can solve problems and try to achieve greater results. Trust is essential to positive collaborative efforts.
When to use: When there is high concern for yours and others' interests. Merges different perspectives, and gains commitments.

Accommodate
Neglect your own concerns to help others achieve what is important to them. This may be a good choice when preserving a relationship is more important than winning a point. Lose the battle and try to win the war.
When to use: When the issue is more important to others than you, or when you want to make a goodwill gesture.

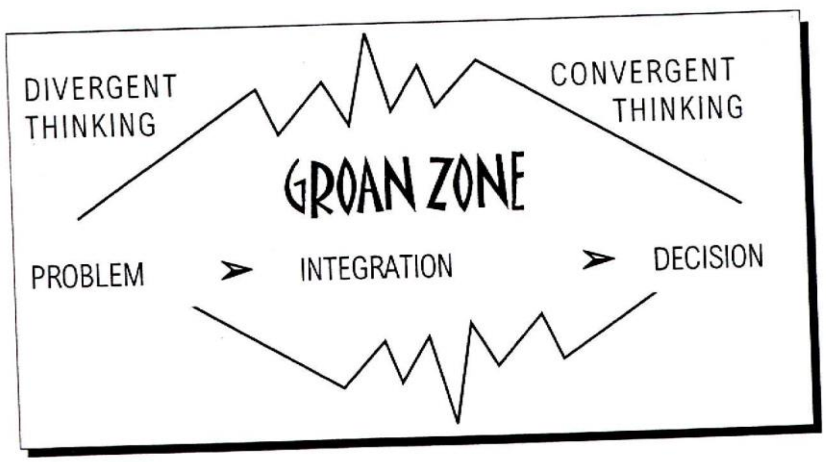
Avoidance
Just stay out of it! This strategy may make sense when there is little chance to resolve a conflict because of personalities, timing, or the issue not being of interest to the group.
When to use: When the issues are trivial issues, when confrontation may cause major damage to relationships, or when other parties can resolve conflict more effectively.

Collaborative Step 3 – Understand the Issue

A thorough assessment is required to define the problem in a way that allows a group to work together to address it. The assessment usually involves reframing the question from "should we/shouldn't we" take some action to "how best do we address" the broader, common issue.

The definition and framing of the problem may be crucial to whether some stakeholders choose to participate. The question needs to be framed in a way that allows the group to attack the issues, rather than each other's positions. The problem statement should interest all the stakeholders without biasing or polarizing them. Having all the stakeholders present is important so that all perspectives are considered when selecting alternative solutions. Once all the stakeholders are represented, the planning team will be working together to address the issue. The team members are likely to discover differences in positions as they work to develop the statement. Understanding group dynamics will assist the facilitator in moving the group though each of the team stages.

Group Dynamics – Conceptual Phases of Problem Solving



Divergent Thinking

During this phase, a number of different activities are going on, which broaden the perspectives and thinking of each participant.

1. Surveying the territory: The participants are getting to know each other and learning about each other's needs, interests, and perspectives. They are also learning about the context (political, legal, social, economic, etc.) in which the collaborative effort takes place.
2. Defining the problem: They are also gathering information about the issues and trying to arrive at a common working understanding of the problem.
3. Generating or expanding the number of possible solutions.
4. Expanding the range of alternative solutions to be evaluated: Participants broaden the list of possible solutions because of their new knowledge of the issues and definition of the problem.

Integrating Perspectives, Issues, and Possible Solutions
Between divergent and convergent thinking, lies the "groan zone" (Kaner and others 1996), which is the phase during which participants struggle to understand and integrate what they have learned about the perspectives of others, the nature of the problem to be addressed, and the range of alternative solutions they have discovered or created. If this phase is proceeding well, discussions of the alternatives identified earlier will lead to a number of new developments.

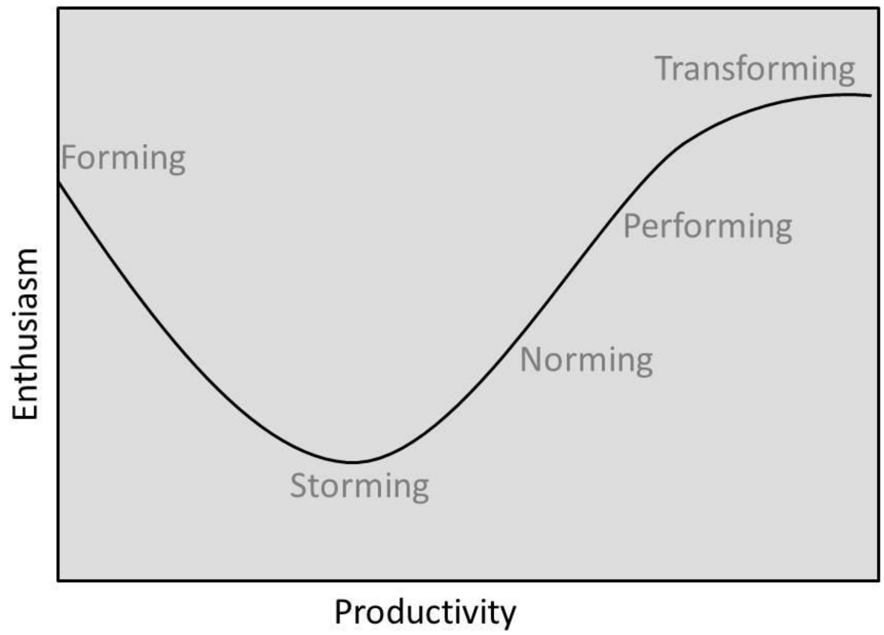
Before *divergent* thinking can become *convergent* thinking, participants must struggle to understand and integrate the new perspectives and the possible solutions they have discovered or created. (See the groan zone diagram on the previous page.)

1. Understanding how the alternatives affect other participants: Participants will be building a shared understanding of how each solution affects the interests and needs of the other participants.
2. Building trust that others are participating in good faith: In this phase of discussions, participants begin to gauge whether others in the group are truly seeking agreement in good faith (where it is possible), or simply seeking unilateral advantage.
3. Building an informal sense of the acceptability of the alternatives: These discussions also build a shared—and informal, at this point—sense of what solutions might work for some, or all, of the participants.

Convergent Thinking: Evaluating Alternative Solutions and Seeking Agreement
During this phase, participants begin to narrow the range of possible solutions through evaluation or combination.

1. Evaluating alternatives: Participants may more formally evaluate the alternatives they have been discussing.
2. Seeking agreement: Using the understanding developed earlier and the evaluation of alternatives, participants will refine and strengthen the most promising alternatives and look for inclusive solutions (that is, ways to accommodate the needs and interests of all participants).

As teams step through the phases of problem solving, they may find enthusiasm for the project affected by the group dynamics. The facilitator's role is to manage the perspectives without allowing the participants to damage relationships. The stages the team will go through are described below.



Team Building Stages

Team-Building Stages

Stage	Characteristics
Forming	This stage starts when members are first brought together to address a problem or work toward a goal. Optimism and expectations are high, but so is anxiety. Generally, this is the "honeymoon" stage, in which the group places a great deal of dependence on the leader and members want to be given a clear mandate, structure, and parameters. At this stage, a team establishes the rules or norms it will operate under.
Storming	At this stage, "the honeymoon is over." Members begin to see a discrepancy between their initial hopes for the team and the realities of working together. Performance plummets. Storming can be due to interpersonal conflicts, lack of skills (particularly interpersonal skills), ineffective leadership, problems with the task, or problems with organizational barriers. Chances are good that at least one of these factors will cause any group to go through a storming stage. It's not unusual for members to challenge or blame the leader at this stage. To survive this stage, a team leader or facilitator must know that it is a normal stage of team formation, and that a balance of assertiveness and neutrality is required to pull a team through. Encourage communication—especially active listening!

Norming; Groan Zone	This is a transitional stage where the group moves from being a group to being a team. Team members confront and resolve their problems; the resolutions that they agree to become their new norms. Team members face their issues, accept feedback, and act on this information. Performance improves. Facilitators or leaders should help the group identify and solve their problems using facilitation and consensus-building tools.
Performing	The team enters into a stage of improved performance where everyone shares power by rotating leadership roles, the official leader is a valued member of the team, everyone is supportive, and all members can—and do—facilitate. Productivity and morale increase. Members are committed and have bonded. The team continually evaluates and corrects. High-quality decisions are made. Time and resources are used efficiently. Conflicts are approached as healthy debates; they rarely get heated or emotional. The team may reject the leader or facilitator as it begins to function as a true team.
Transforming	At this stage, the team must know "when to say when." If a team's existence was planned to end when a particular project was done, it should disband once all the necessary tasks are completed so that team members can go on to solve other problems. The team should receive recognition for its accomplishments. Members should review what they learned and take this experience with them into future groups.

Once the planning team understands all stakeholder perspectives and what these stakeholders may lose if the problem is not resolved, it is time to develop a statement that describes the issue as it applies to all the stakeholders. Using the information from the perspective swap, the team should develop a problem statement that all the stakeholders can live with and support. The statement should be neutral, and can be used to explain what the team is trying to accomplish. . The problem statement is the description of the issue that is written without considering the positions stakeholders may hold. It should be unbiased and non-polarizing. This statement can also be used later to develop a marketing statement to engage the broader stakeholder community.

The ideal statement will have these components:

- The asset at the center of the issue
- Where that asset is located
- The impact of the issue on the community
- The cause of the issue

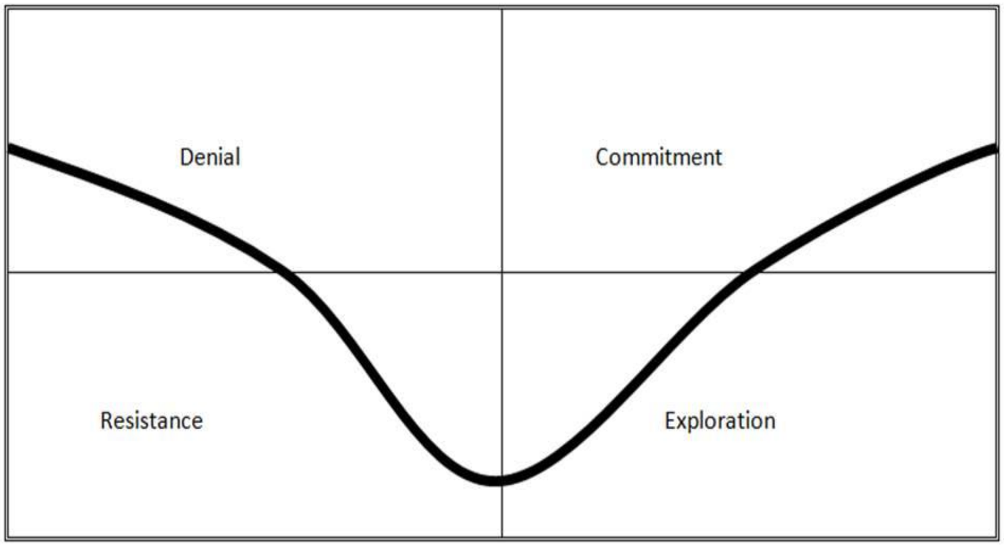
Engaging the Broader Community

Now that the planning team understands the issue and has developed a statement describing the issue, it is time to consider engaging the stakeholders the team members represent. Members of the planning team will need to share the problem statement with their constituents. It's likely that the constituents will be wary of the information their representatives bring to them until they have a full understanding of the issue. Members of the planning team must understand how the problem may affect the constituents, and how the constituents feel about the impending change. Understanding the dynamics of change can help the team members guide their constituents through the process.

Keys to Successful Planned Change

- Commitment and support from the primary stakeholders, in this case, the planning team members who represents their interests.
- Sufficient involvement of primary stakeholders in the planning and implementation of changes to ensure ownership for the outcomes.
- Recognition that the process of change is as important as the product or accomplishments.
- Inclusion of a competent change agent and one or more change champions. The change agent is the person coordinating, facilitating, or guiding change. A change champion is a group or person who will support and legitimize the change.
- Presence of perceived benefits and incentives—both positive and negative—for change must outweigh the reasons and excuses for not changing (Cyr and Meier 1993, page 34).

Dynamics of Change: The Transition Curve



The transition curve (Scott and others 1990, adapted from Cyr and Meyer 1993, page 38) shows how change occurs over time. Change requires both an external and internal process. Initially, an organization or environment will deny that there is a problem that could benefit from change. As time moves on, the external forces become more accepting of the need for change organizationally, but individuals will resist the concept of change and must internally overcome this resistance. Once the individual accepts the idea that change is needed, the individual then begins to explore ways to change. In the final step, the ideas for implementing change are discussed openly, and the organization commits to the new concept through consensus.

Dynamics of Change
(Scott and others 1990, adapted from Cyr and Meier 1993, page 39)

Stage	Typical Reactions	Effective Actions
Denial	* Expressing shock * Feeling threatened * Immobilizing people * Decreasing productivity * Experiencing slowed thinking * Lacking focus	* Giving visible support * Providing new information * Helping build networks * Expressing feelings * Communicating clearly * Linking to benefits
Resistance	* Expressing anger, loss, emotion, or depression * Attempting to hold on * Maintaining familiar ways * Returning to old methods	* Identifying desirable attributes or values * Showing how to let go * Maintaining some elements * Finding areas of stability
Exploration	* Expressing grief over loss * Acknowledging change * Willing to listen	* Forming teams to explore new options * Using participation to make decisions * Supporting new behaviors
Commitment	* Accepting new rules * Increasing comfort and flexibility with change * Willing to take risks	* Implementing change and pursuing new directions * Supporting risk taking and innovation * Providing constructive feedback

Collaborative Step 4 – Develop Alternatives

Developing the Right Alternatives

Once the planning team has conducted meetings to educate the stakeholders and possibly the public about the issue, how will alternative solutions be developed? Will the team develop the alternatives, or will the stakeholders be asked to assist? The team needs to understand that the stakeholders will have more buy-in to the solution if they help develop it—but may feel disenfranchised if they are asked to help and their ideas are not considered. Everyone must understand how the planning team will make decisions and the reasons behind those decisions.

Pros for developing solutions with the stakeholders or the public:

- More buy-in
- Potential for new ideas and better solutions
- Easier enforcement when the stakeholders like the solution
- Greater understanding of the issue and the chosen solution

Cons for developing solutions with the stakeholders or the public:

- Much more difficult and complex meetings
- Skilled team of facilitators required to keep contention down and production up
- If solutions are not affordable or practical, communicating which alternatives are chosen is essential
- More time is required
- May disenfranchise stakeholders if funding for the best solution is unavailable

There are many tools for generating alternative solutions. Section 3 of this manual describes a participatory mapping activity that allows participants to place solutions directly on a map.

Collaborative Step 5 – Select Alternatives

After the planning team has generated alternative solutions with the help of stakeholders, the team must decide which ones to implement. Will the team select the alternatives to implement, or will the stakeholders be asked to assist? The team needs to understand that the stakeholders will have more buy-in to the solution if they helped select it. Everyone must understand how the planning team will decide and the reasons behind those decisions.

Pros for stakeholders or the public selecting the alternatives:

- More buy-in
- Easier enforcement when the stakeholders choose the solution
- Greater understanding of the issue and the chosen solution

Cons for developing solutions with the stakeholders or the public:

- If there is not funding for the best solution, stakeholders may be dis-enfranchised.
- If for some reason the alternative the stakeholders selected is not implemented, they will no longer trust collaborative processes and may sabotage projects in the future.

Section 3 of this workbook describes several tools that can be used for selecting alternatives. Many of these tools can be used with large groups.

Collaborative Step 6 – Implement Alternatives

The planning team must finally develop an action plan to implement the selected alternatives. The plan should include these elements. (The Gantt Chart included in Section 3 is a helpful project management tool.)

- What needs to be done?
- Who will do it?
- By when?
- Are there projects that need to be completed before another can start?
- What is the backup plan when a project gets behind?
- How will each item on the list be done?
- What is the process for modifying the alternative, if necessary?
- Develop a communications plan to keep the participants in the process informed of progress.

The team must spell out the specific steps that need to be taken to implement the solution, as well as specify how things should be done, when, and by whom. Performance indicators that answer the question, "How will we know we have been successful?" can make it easier to evaluate the results later on.

Troubleshoot the action plan.
Team members must ask, "What are all the things that can get in the way of implementing our actions?" and "What can we do about each of these possible blocks?"

Report on progress.
The team must determine 1) a time when the group will meet back to report progress, 2) the form for the reports (written or verbal), 3) items that need to be reported on (only report on essential items), 4) people who need know the group's decision and action steps, and 5) the way the group will communicate with them.

Evaluate the decision process.
Finally, the team must ask participants how they think it went. The process may need to be modified before proceeding, so getting their feedback is essential. Methods to gather this information are anonymous evaluation forms, exit surveys, or an open discussion.

Celebrate a successful collaborative problem-solving process!

Section 2 – Facilitation Skills and Techniques

Understanding how to use facilitation skills will improve every meeting a person attends, even when not facilitating the meeting. Facilitation is not magic, although it can appear to be when a difficult situation is resolved without the expected conflict. Facilitation begins well before the meeting occurs. The facilitator will assist the meeting conveners with the agenda, the logistics, the participant list, and the process and the tools that will be used in the meeting. Understanding how to facilitate includes knowing the facilitator's importance, the traits of a facilitator, the dynamics of group discussions, and ways to recognize and redirect difficult behaviors.

A facilitator believes that everyone's opinion is of equal value, regardless of rank or position. People are more committed to the ideas and plans that they have helped create, so providing them with the opportunity to create the plan will increase buy-in for the project. Lastly, the facilitator believes that the process—if designed well and honestly applied—can be trusted to achieve results.

Leading or facilitating a meeting has a number of potential perils and pitfalls, however, particularly when any portion of the meeting calls for a group discussion. The list below includes some of the difficulties that occur in any discussion involving more than two people.

Potential problems in group discussions*:*

- Adequate meeting preparation has not occurred.
- The purpose of the meeting isn't established or clarified.
- Participants lack confidence or trust in the leader.
- Participants do not feel free to express themselves.
- Alternatives are not considered adequately.
- The group strays off task.
- Language is too technical or has too much jargon for the participants.

Ways to improve group discussion:

- Leaders practice good facilitation skills.
- The meeting and processes are well thought out and planned.
- Participants understand the purpose of the meeting.
- The participants are kept on track.
- Ground rules are established and participants are held to them.

Process versus Content

Although neutral on content, the facilitator is a champion of the process. It is important to understand the difference between process and content. Process and content are the two dimensions of any interaction between people—whether the interaction is one-on-one or in groups.

Process

The *process* is the structure, framework, methods, and tools used in all interactions between people. These include interactions that are formal (meetings and professional) and informal (personal). Process also refers to the climate or spirit established in meetings, as well as the style of the facilitator.

Content

The *content* is the topic or subject being discussed at the meeting. Content includes the task, agenda items, decisions made, and issues explored.

The content of any meeting is *what* is being discussed. Content is expressed in the agenda, and in what is said at the meeting itself. Because content is the verbal part of any meeting, it is obvious and typically consumes the attention of participants.

On the other hand, process deals with *how* things are being discussed, including methods, procedures, format, and tools used. It also includes group dynamics and the meeting climate. Because process is nonverbal, it is more difficult to pinpoint and is often ignored while participants focus on the content.

A team or group leader who participates in the discussion is acting as a content expert or content leader, while a leader or an outside neutral person who manages the process and orchestrates the actions is acting as the facilitator.

An orchestra provides a good analogy to this way of approaching meetings. The participants are the audience, and the team leader is the lead violin. The facilitator serves as the conductor, organizing and directing the process, but never plays an instrument. The facilitator, like the conductor, orchestrates the action and guides the outcome with his or her direction, but never contributes to it directly. More information about developing process agendas can be found in Section 3 of this workbook, "Facilitation Tools."

Content: The What	Process: The How
• Subjects for discussion • Task • Problems being solved • Decisions made • Agenda items • Goal	• Methods and procedures • Relations (and their maintenance) • Tools being used • Decision process • Rules or norms set • Group dynamics • Climate

Facilitation Skills

Basic Skills

The following list of skills are necessary when facilitating a meeting. Practicing these skills is the best way to master them. Remember the skills by the first letter of each; a good facilitator makes a "SPLASH" in the meeting!

Stay Neutral on Content

Facilitators focus on the *process* role and should avoid the temptation to offer opinions on the topic under discussion. Because the facilitator is typically standing at the front of the room, it is easy for participants to attribute a leadership role to the facilitator—especially if they recognize the facilitator as a content expert. If the facilitator participates in the content discussion, he or she may impede the free flow of ideas and open exchange of information as participants defer to the "expert." For this reason, facilitators who change roles must immediately explain—clearly and explicitly—why they are stepping out of the facilitation role and into a participating role (and let people know when they return to the facilitation role).

> *How Neutral Can a Facilitating Content Expert Really Be?*
> Having the *content expert* in the decision-making meeting facilitate the meeting is a difficult challenge. The group members may expect ideas and suggestions but also need to know that their input will be considered. The facilitating leader should let the group know when he or she is stepping out of the facilitation role to provide content. It is important for the participants to understand when the facilitator is contributing to the knowledge base, rather than facilitating, so that they can trust the facilitator to accurately record, and later utilize, the participant input. In some circumstances, facilitator participation can negatively impact the group's buy-in to the decision. This is particularly true in a regulatory agency, when the meeting output will feed into a regulatory process. In these circumstances, organizations should consider using an outside facilitator who does not have a stake in the outcome.

Paraphrase

This technique involves repeating what has been said, using different words. It allows the facilitator to clarify what is being said and test understanding. Paraphrasing will also allow the participants to hear the point a second time, from a different person, stated a little differently. Paraphrasing also provides an opportunity to ascertain if the facilitator has correctly heard or interpreted what was said.

Listen Actively

Facilitators should look people in the eye, use attentive body language, and let them know their ideas are heard and understood. Body language should be neutral, without showing support or disapproval of any suggestions, comments, or ideas. Neutral body language can encourage open communication. Facilitators should face the speaker and take a step toward the individual to show interest. Use the other facilitation skills to encourage full participation.

Ask Questions

Questions test assumptions, invite participation, gather information, and probe for hidden points. Facilitators should ask open-ended questions to encourage thorough discussion of all ideas presented.

Summarize
After listening attentively to all that has been said, a facilitator should offer a concise and timely summary. Summarizing is a good way to revive a discussion—or to end one when things seem to be wrapping up.

Hold Up a Mirror
The mirror technique involves explaining to the group the behavior from the facilitator's perspective so the participants can interpret their actions and make corrections. This is particularly effective for drawing the group's attention back to the tasks at hand or dealing with disruptive behaviors. The facilitator might say to a low energy group, "You all look like you may need a break."

Synthesize
The facilitator works with the group to build on ideas and combine diverse concepts to create new concepts. This builds consensus and commitment.

Ping-Pong
When someone asks a question, the facilitator can "bounce" the question to another participant. This allows participants to converse with each other and provides the opportunity for the facilitator to avoid becoming a part of the "content" discussion and losing neutrality by answering.

Label Sidetracks
The facilitator should tell the group when it gets off track. The group can decide if it wants to pursue the sidetrack, or get back to the agenda.

Dock It in the Marina (also known as the Parking Lot)
When the group is off task, or an individual asks a question that is not on the agenda, the facilitator should check in with the group to determine how important the sidetrack is. The group may decide to continue the discussion in lieu of the agenda or save it for a later meeting. When the group decides to save the item for a future meeting, the facilitator should note the item on a flip chart labeled "Marina."

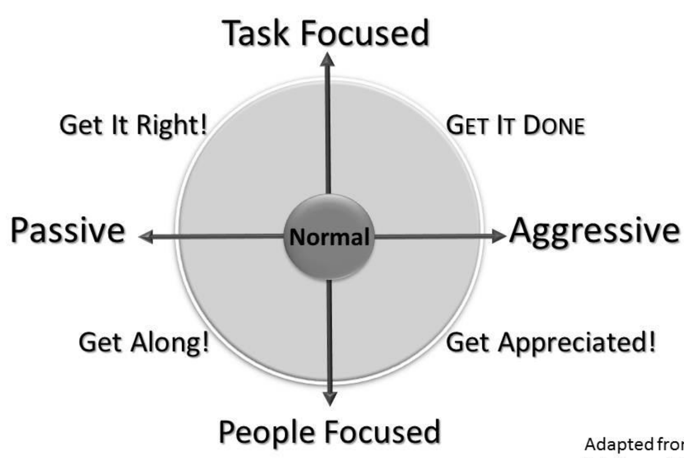
Facilitating Participants – Stealth Facilitation Techniques
In a meeting without a facilitator, some facilitation techniques may help make the meeting more productive. These are techniques any participant can employ.

- Ask for a round of introductions if there are people in the group who do not know each other. This engages the participants, and encourages them to speak.
- Ask for clarification of the objectives for the meeting. This will help everyone recognize when the meeting is off track.
- Offer to take notes. Note takers can control the speed of the conversation, clarify points, summarize, and ensure that everyone has heard the comments the same way.
- If the discussion seems to be getting off track, suggest that the topic be placed in the "Marina" for discussion at a later time.
- Suggest a round-robin if there are several people who are not contributing.
- At the end of the meeting, ask for clarification on the decisions that have been made and the action plan.
- Provide an organizing framework. For example, put the ideas on a timeline, or group them on a white board or flip chart to get everybody on the same page (this also acknowledges different learning styles in the group).
- Ask questions that will lead the group into a clearer direction.
- If the meeting is getting off track, provide an intervention (see interventions below)
- Suggest a break.
- When two parties disagree, restate each perspective for everyone to hear.

Dealing with Disruptive Behaviors

Motivating Factors for Different Personalities
When dealing with different personalities, it helps to reflect on the motivating factors that drive the actions of these individuals. Understanding what is motivating a difficult behavior assists the facilitator in redirecting that behavior. Personalities can range from passive to assertive and from people-focused to task-focused. The illustration below (Brinkman 1994) shows the motivating factors that relate to these greater character traits.

Task-focused assertive people are concerned about finishing the task at hand, at all costs. They can overwhelm other participants, and dominate the conversations. The facilitator can assure them that the task will be completed and that all perspectives need to be considered. Building trust is an important milestone for the facilitator so that this type of person can let go of the need to focus solely on the task.



Adapted from
Brinkman 1994

Task-focused passive people are perfectionists who don't want to make a decision until they have all the information and have considered all the options. The facilitator can assure them that they will have an opportunity to hear the known information and that the decision will not be made until all perspectives have been considered. Remind them that a decision does need to be made, regardless of whether there is enough information.

People-focused assertive people want to make sure that everyone is participating and comfortable with the process. They are less concerned with completing the task than with the comfort of all the individuals. The facilitator can assure them that they will make sure everyone is heard and all the input is considered.

People-focused passive people are uncomfortable with tension. They are unconcerned with the completion of the task as long as everyone is getting along. The facilitator can assure them that although different perspectives are being discussed, and that it will get a little tense when people disagree, it is important to have the conversation—and that the facilitator will not let any member damage his or her relationship with the others.

Interventions

When behavior begins to disrupt a meeting, the facilitator should be prepared to intervene. An intervention is "any action or set of actions deliberately taken to improve the functioning of the group."

Regardless of its length and complexity, an intervention is always an interruption. The facilitator must stop the discussion and draw attention to an aspect of the process. The facilitator's goal should be to minimize the interruption by resolving the situation as quickly as possible.

The facilitator should be cautious about intervening. If a facilitator intervenes every single time there's a distraction or problem with any member of the group, there may be too many interruptions. Repetitive, inappropriate behaviors that don't seem to resolve themselves need to be corrected. If the situation corrects itself after a minute or two, then no intervention is necessary.

Before conducting an intervention, the facilitator should ask themselves the following questions:

- Is the problem serious?
- Will it go away by itself in a few minutes?
- Is the problem jeopardizing the output of the meeting?
- Will the intervention be more disruptive than the problem?

If it is serious, doesn't go away quickly, and is hurting the ability to reach the outcome of the meeting, the facilitator should proceed with a planned intervention.

The 3-Step Intervention Strategy

Interventions need to be worded carefully so they don't make the situation worse. Practicing interventions in different situations will allow the facilitator to master the skill and use it when necessary. There are generally three distinct components to an intervention statement:

1. **Hold up a Mirror.** Describe what is happening in the room. This is nonjudgmental and doesn't attribute motive. It's based solely on observations of actual events.
2. **Make an impact statement.** Tell members how their actions are affecting the process and other people. Base this on actual observations.
3. **Redirect the behavior.** Direct the group back to the next item on the agenda and continue through the process. If the intervention created tension in the group, consider giving participants a break.

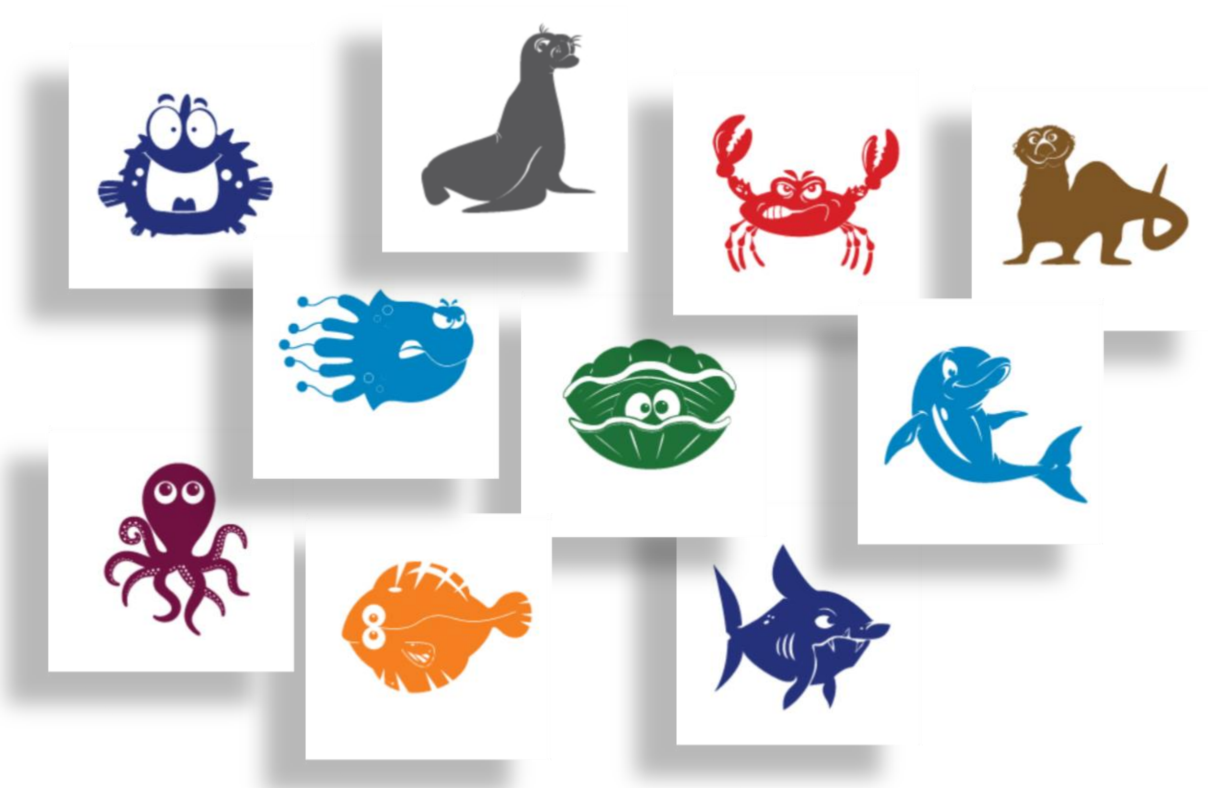
Special note: Step 2 can be omitted if the impact statements might increase contention.

Recognizing Difficult Behavior Types

Facilitators must manage difficult behaviors in meetings using skills that will not alienate others, or inhibit productive conversations. In the *Star Wars* movie's famous bar scene, the personality of the zany character was apparent by the appearance. Each character had a distinctive look. Yet in meetings, facilitators will have no idea about the group of characters with whom they're dealing.

That's because participants' normal outward appearances can belie troublesome behavior. In the following section, strategies for dealing with the crazy cast of characters are categorized by behavior. The key is to identify stereotypical behavioral patterns and understand the suggested responses so that the facilitator can help participants move through the meeting under challenging circumstances. The following pages are some suggestions for dealing with these stereotypical behaviors.

Please note: No animals were harmed in the making of this workbook.



Complaining or Negative Crab

Motivation – passive, task-focused and wants to get it right

The complainer can come in many forms: whiner, critic, or obstructionist. Crabs are passive and task-focused, and they want to get it done. Despite the negative connotation, this person is often motivated by perfection. Negative, complaining people may seem to object to everything, asserting that ideas proposed will not work or are impossible. The complainer may completely deflate any optimism others express for a project and may block others from accomplishing goals. Crabs gripe and do little to improve the situation—either because they feel powerless or because they refuse to bear the responsibility for an imperfect solution. **Less**

Gentle Intervention

Stay Neutral:
"I know you value the quality of the solutions you develop."

Ask clarifying questions; ask for the specifics that focus on the content:
"Can you describe the reason why the proposed solution is flawed? Perhaps you can suggest a way we might improve it?"

Write the complaint on easel chart; refer to it when the person repeats it:
"Let me capture your concerns on the chart so that we all understand what to avoid."

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"Crabby, I'm betting you have high expectations for this process."
or
"You seem dissatisfied with these ideas."

Describe the impact:
"A proposed solution from you will allow the meeting to move forward and then we can consider all viable solutions."
or
"Negativity may be deflating the optimism needed to carry the group forward and obstructing our ability to reach the day's goal."

Redirect the behavior:
"Let me capture your concern on the easel chart so we can move on to the next issue."
or
"That's a unique way of seeing things Crabby. Otter, what do you think about that?"
or
"Can we agree on the larger issue and flesh out some of the details at another time?"

Dominating or Hostile Shark

Motivation – aggressive, task and efficiency focused

Sharks are aggressive and focused on efficiency and the task. They can be hostile and dominating and might try to intimidate and bully people. They make cutting remarks or throw temper tantrums when they do not get their own way. Some hostile individuals will be task-focused and want to get the job done while maintaining control. These individuals will generally have a more focused attack on the failure of others to complete a specific task or take necessary actions. Others may explode and attack other people in a more random fashion, which is typically done to command attention. **Less**

Gentle Intervention

Be firm, but not threatening; be friendly:
"Sharky, I can tell you care deeply about this topic, and I would like to capture what you have said in the parking lot, and then hear what others think. Let's use a round robin to hear from others, and please save your next idea for the next round."

Listen actively, give them time to vent, and use the person's name to get their attention. Then use ping pong to engage others in the conversation. Call the name, pause, call it again and again until Sharky pauses, then jump in with your intervention:
"Sharky, Sharky, Sharky—thank you for your knowledge and your perspective, it is important information for us to consider. Clammy, how does your perspective compare to Sharky's?"

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"Sharky! You are having such strong reactions that [explain what you see]."

Describe the impact:
"Other participants' optimism for this process is being deflated."

Redirect the behavior:
"Please hold your comments for a few minutes so other people can express themselves."
or
"Remember the ground rules, one person speaks at a time, and we need to respect each other. Now we'd like to hear from someone else. Dolphin what do you think?"

Talkative and Chatty Blowfish

Motivation – assertive, people person, wants everyone to get appreciated

Blowfishy is a very chatty, assertive "people person." Blowfish want everyone to feel comfortable and positive about the process. They have a tendency to be overly talkative (almost compulsively) because they are enthusiastic, want to show off, or are well-informed and eager to use their knowledge. Blowfish can dominate the "floor time" at the expense of other group members. While they frequently have good ideas and strong contributions to make, they also ramble, monopolize the discussion, and do not give others an opportunity to express their thoughts. **Less**

Gentle Intervention

Listen actively: "I'd like to capture all your points on the easel chart and then get the other participants' feedback as well. Help me make sure I capture your thoughts correctly. Your first point is [pause for response]?"

Label sidetracks and interrupt tactfully by clearly saying his or her name: "Blowfishy? Blowfishy? Blowfishy? Is this comment related to what we are discussing or should it go onto the marina [parking lot]?"

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"Blowfishy, you are adept at expressing your thoughts and ideas."
or
"I appreciate your enthusiasm for this topic."

Describe the impact:
"Let's use a round-robin technique to allow everyone an opportunity to contribute."
or
"We are collecting information from everyone right now—it is essential to hear other opinions and information."

Redirect the behavior:
"Thank you Blowfishy. Now let's hear from someone else."
or
"Hold that thought for now, and let's let Clam finish his thought."
or
"Let's ask some others what they think [ping pong]."

Shy and Quiet Clam

Motivation – passive, tasked focused, wants to get it right

The clam is shy, passive, and task-focused. Clammy wants to get it right. Shy individuals may be reluctant or afraid to express their ideas in a group setting, so they may appear to be unresponsive. **Less**

Gentle Intervention

If intervention is necessary, consider communicating with the clam individually. Using the clam's name, ask for his or her thoughts: "Clammy, do you have any points to add to the discussion?"

Allow Clammy time to answer, even if it takes longer than is comfortable:
"Please let Clammy respond"
or
"Clammy has the floor."

Use anonymous input techniques that make participation easy. Record all answers given: "Please write your answer to the following question on an index card, and hand it to me."

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"I'm guessing you have an idea or thought about this?"
or
"I noticed that ["your mouth opened," "your eyes lit up," "you leaned forward," "you wrote something down"] when that was mentioned and thought you might have something to add."

Describe the impact:
"We want to understand your perspective on this."

Redirect the behavior:·
"Please share what you consider important."

Entertaining and Diverting Dolphin

Motivation – assertive, people focused, wants to be appreciated

The dolphin is assertive and people-focused and will entertain the group to keep tension down. Dolphins want everyone to be comfortable and understand their contributions. Dolphins may just want to keep the conversation light, or they may be uninvolved in the substance of group efforts; instead, they make unrelated jokes and comments. Entertainers may divert attention from the subject under discussion with distracting antics that focus attention on them. However, they also can play a constructive role when group discussions become tense and stressful for group members. **Less**

Gentle Intervention

Ask Questions:
Ignore the humorous remark and follow up with a serious one: "Does anyone have something to add directly related to the topic?"

Ask the dolphin to relate the story to the topic being discussed: "Dolphie, I'm unclear how your input relates to [the topic]."

Paraphrase:
Restate the input using your own words to refocus the discussion: "Dolphie, if I understand your point, you are trying to express the idea that [paraphrase input]."

Write comments on an easel chart: "Dolphie, have I captured your suggestion here?"

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"You certainly know how to add a light touch to the discussion."
or
"I appreciate the role humor has on keeping tension down."

Describe the impact:
"In order to accomplish the task today, we don't want to inhibit others' ability to remain focused and on topic."

Redirect the behavior:
"Do you have a comment that directly relates to the topic, or should I move on?".

Under-Participator, the Apathetic Flounder

Motivation – passive, people person, wants everyone to get along

The flounder is a passive person who wants everyone to get along. Flounders may be uninterested in the topic or not comfortable sharing their perspectives. The under-participator does not appear to be engaged in the group or its formal discussions but may say more during breaks at meetings. The group member who remains under-involved may be introverted, an exceptional listener, a deeply reflective individual with wonderful ideas, or someone who is simply detached from the subject.
Less

Gentle Intervention

Note: If intervention is necessary, consider communicating with the flounder individually.

Ask questions:
Use this person's name.
Wait through an awkward silence, and if other participants feel compelled to speak, ask them to please hold their comments until the flounder has had a chance to offer his or her opinion or reaction.

Paraphrase: restate the flounder's comments to ensure that everyone hears them, and acknowledge the contributions.

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"Flounder, I'm guessing you took the time to participate because you're interested in how this issue is resolved."
or
"I'm guessing you have an opinion about this."

Describe its impact:
"We would be interested in hearing your perspective on the solutions. The solutions that are selected will be more robust if all the interests are considered."

Redirect behavior:
"Please share your perspective on the issue."

Argumentative Jellyfish

Motivation – aggressive, tasked focused, wants to get it done

The jellyfish is task-focused and aggressive. They are confrontational and want to finish the job their way. The jellyfish is another version of the hostile, aggressive, domineering type. With their stinging remarks, jellyfish tend to be blunt and argumentative. Jellyfish enjoy a good fight and find debating and intellectual games challenging and rewarding. **Less**

Gentle Intervention

Stay neutral: “Jellyfish, that’s an interesting perspective.”

Paraphrase what this person is saying using a soft voice and patient, reasoned statements: “Jellyfish, you have a concern about the proposed solution—let’s break that down into understandable parts.”

Acknowledge this person’s positive contributions: “Thank you for that suggestion, let me capture that for reference.”

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
“Jellyfish, you must feel very strongly about this issue.”
or
“Remember our ground rule that everyone has the right to voice their opinions.”
or
“Remember to be respectful of other participants.”

Describe its impact:
“I’d like to point out that your approach is keeping us from accomplishing the purpose of the meeting. Please make only constructive comments and make them in a respectful manner.”
or
“Please recognize that your passionate response may frustrate other participants and compromise their ability to contribute by putting them in a defensive position.”

Redirect behavior:
“I’d like to suggest that we move on, and I ask that you all be respectful and remember the ground rules before you speak. Clammy what is your position on the matter at hand?”.

The Know-It-All, Arrogant Sea Lion

Motivation – assertive, people focused, wants to get appreciated

Sea lions are assertive and need the group to accept their expertise, and they can become know-it-alls when questioned. They believe that they have more credibility than has been acknowledged and want everyone to understand and agree with them. The sea lion knows a lot about the topic but does not contribute in a way that sits well with other participants, sometimes using his or her credentials, age, length of service, or residency to disparage an idea. With cockiness and an inflated ego, the sea lion can be condescending, imposing, pompous, or arrogant toward others. In all likelihood, this behavior will make others feel as though there is no point in contributing. **Less**

Gentle Intervention

Listen to sea lions and acknowledge what they say, allowing them to be experts: "Thank you for your expertise, sea lion; let me make sure I capture that correctly. Now I'd like to hear from someone else."
Ping pong the conversation to other experts in the room: "Clammy, can you build on what sea lion had to say?"

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"We understand that you are one of the experts in this area."
or
"I think you have made your point, which is [paraphrase sea lion's comments]."

Describe its impact:
"Remember that we need to hear from everyone in the group in the allotted time."
or
"Now we'd like to hear from others."
or
"I need to move us on."

Redirect behavior:
"Thank you for your view; now I'd like to hear from others."
or
"Clammy, can you add to this information?"

Affable, Eagar Sea Otter

Motivation – passive, people person, wants everyone to get along

The sea otter is a passive "people person" and wants everyone to get along. Sea otters are super agreeable, overly positive people who are optimistic, very reasonable, sincere, and supportive. They are people-oriented and aim to please those nearby (for instance, by always saying "yes"). They seek approval by giving approval. They may cause difficulty in group situations because they overcommit or are unreliable. **Less**

Gentle Intervention

Ask probing questions that will make honesty easy: "What needs to be done? How long will it take?"

Ask specific questions about what it will take to fulfill commitments: "What other projects are you working on? Do you have any other ideas about how we can do this?"

Paraphrase so sea otters are aware of what they are saying: "Do you have any other ideas about how we can do this?"

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"Your enthusiasm and willingness to help are just what we need."

"You have committed to some pretty big ideas and tasks here [cite examples]."

Describe the impact:
"If you sign up for too much, it may delay forward progress."

Redirect behavior:
"I'm sensing some concern about some of these ideas being overly ambitious. What do others think? [ping pong]."
or
"There are subsequent steps that rely on these steps being completed, such as [cite examples]."
or
"There are people counting on this being accomplished by the deadline or milestone [state the specifics]. Are you sure you can commit to or complete these steps?"
or
"Perhaps you want to check in with some people before you commit?"

Indecisive Octopus

Motivation – passive, tasked-focused, wants to get it right

The octopus is the perfectionist, passive and task-focused. Whether he or she is afraid of being wrong, disagreeing with someone else, or just going on record, the octopus causes problems by the inability to move forward. The octopus becomes torn over choices, trying to find the perfect decision instead of the best-possible choice based on available information and resources. These people cannot make up their minds and also might be blind to logic and reason by the strength of feelings about themselves, their opinions, or the impact of those opinions on others.

Gentle Intervention

Ask questions of octopuses to draw them out and let them process: "Tell us what else you need to know to make the decision?"

Paraphrase what they are saying so they can hear it in new words: "What I believe I hear you saying is [paraphrase]" or "Here is a list of the options agreed upon. Which is the best option, in your opinion?"

Firm Intervention

Reflect what you see:
"I can tell you take this seriously."
or
"You are carefully weighing the options."
or
"You are having difficulty making a decision on this issue."

Describe the impact:
"In order to make the best decision, the group needs to understand the direction you are leaning and your position."

Redirect behavior:
"Please be honest with us and tell us which option you are leaning toward."
or
"We understand this is a tough decision, but we need to move on. Please tell us which of the two two options best resolve the issue."
or
"There are no perfect decisions. Which one would you select as the best possible choice under the circumstances and with the available information?"

Even More Sea Creatures!

Tangential Talking Squid

The tangent talker hijacks the topic of the group by taking discussions off on tangents—topics unrelated to the issue at hand. One minute the discussion is on topic and the next minute it's in "left field" as the agenda topic has been taken on a tangent. The meeting leader's ability to recognize the tangent and refocus is essential to a productive meeting.

> ***Redirect***: "Let's remember to confine ourselves to the topic at hand" is a good way to get back on track. Alternately saying, "Let's try to avoid tangents" also labels such behavior as contrary to the group's aims. Also, the facilitator can "park" extraneous items in a "parking lot" list where they're noted and can be addressed later.

Oppositional Devilfish

Let's face it, there's a devil's advocate in every crowd and in most meetings, too. This person seems to relish taking the opposite tack. Whatever the argument being put forth, this person delights in taking an opposing view. It's sport for them, an exercise in opposition. The more unpopular the stance the more exciting they find the challenge. Often this participant begins by saying "just for the sake of argument, I believe the opposite is true." While there is value in looking at issues from multiple points of view and to avoid group think, the devil's advocate applies this technique to every issue, every argument, and every conversation.

> ***Redirect***: Hold on to the agenda and get comfortable. This could take a while. A good meeting leader can praise this person's ability to raise alternative issues. At the same time, the meeting leader must indicate its inappropriateness, given time parameters or previously agreed-upon issues.

Cynical Eel

The ultimate naysayer, the cynic has a master's degree in negativity. Adroit at using the phrase, "it won't work," they are skilled at deflating and defeating whatever motion is in motion. "Can't be done. They'll never buy it. We tried it once and it was a failure." The cynic's motto: just say no.

> **Redirect**: Challenge cynical participants to think like the devil's advocate; have them suppose for a minute that the idea or project could work. Use a common conflict resolution tool and ask cynics to embrace the other side's point of view as if it were their own, and argue that side's position.

Pandora's Parrotfish

These meeting monsters just have to tackle issues that are emotional, touchy, or are "hot buttons" for others in the meeting. In every meeting there are topics that are sure to strike a nerve, to provoke an emotional reaction, or enter the group into a quagmire. The Pandora's box openers lead the entire meeting into areas that provoke frustration, animosities, and often resentment too. Once this box is opened, it's hard to get the issues back into the box. Even worse, some culprits reopen issues from earlier in the meeting that have already been resolved.

Redirect: The best cure: a firm “let’s not go there” from the meeting’s facilitator. Other phrases like “let’s cross that bridge when we get there” or “that’s a hornet’s nest we don’t need to disturb” label certain subjects out of bounds for the meeting.

Brown Noser Remora
There’s often a sycophant in a meeting. This participant is obsequious, bending over backwards to ingratiate himself or herself to the meeting leader or another power broker. The person so busy currying favor with others that they subvert whatever true feelings he or she may have about issues. This participant is seen by other participants to be in the pocket of the person to whom they’re cow-towing. Ultimately, brown nosers are seen for who they are and become predictable and not trusted.

Redirect: Try to elicit brown nosers’ ideas and preferences before asking others as a way of drawing them out.

Mechanical Fish: Yep, these are actually cell phones, pagers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and laptop computers. Each distracts its owner and others, too, as they intrude upon participants’ attention spans during meetings.

Redirect: A good meeting leader will create ground rules or norms for meetings, including turning off these gadgets at their outset. It’s hard to compete with human distractions, let alone electronic ones as well.

Meetings are full of characters. Facilitators need to study participant behavior in meetings, including their own behavior, to better understand the style of interaction. The character of a meeting will surely be affected by the characters in the meeting.

Adapted from Craig Harrison’s “10 Characters You’ll Meet at a Business Meeting: Employees Bring Both Their Good and Bad to Business Meetings” website, *http://humanresources.about.com/od/meetingmanagement/a/meeting_people.htm*.

Section 3 – Facilitation Tools

Tools and techniques can be used to accomplish objectives and keep participants engaged. These tools not only assist with meeting the established objectives, but they also help to reduce conflict, build rapport, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate. By considering the objective of the meeting or session, organizers can choose the right tool for the job. There are many tools available for facilitators, and some create their own. These are a few that are used in the course.

Table 1: Tool Objectives

Tool Objective	Steps in the Collaborative Process						Anytime
	Assess Collaborative Potential	Engage Stakeholders	Understand the Issue	Generate Alternatives	Select the Alternatives	Implement Alternatives	
Brainstorming							x
Criteria Ranking					x		
Exit Survey							x
Electronic Polling							x
Flip Charting							x
Forced Ranking					x		
Gantt Chart						x	
Ground Rules							x
Impact-Effort Grid					x	x	
Multi-voting		x			x		
Participatory Mapping		x	x	x	x		
Perspective Swap			x		x		
Process Agenda							x
Ten-Minute Priorities					X		

Brainstorming

Purpose:
Brainstorming is an effective method to gather perceptions and ideas. The goal is to generate as many ideas as possible, with ideas building on one another. Participants should have equal status, and their ideas should be presented without comment or evaluation.

Process:
In groups of 6 to 10 people, participants share their ideas. If the group is too small, participants are not stimulated to generate ideas and build alternatives off others. If it is too large, equal participation is difficult to achieve. The facilitator follows these steps:

1. Use round-robin (or another technique that ensures everyone's participation) to collect ideas from each participant.
2. List *all* input on easel pads without evaluation or criticism.
3. Ask for clarification as required.
4. Keep participants from critiquing ideas, or getting side tracked discussing one of the ideas.

Variations:
Anonymous Brainstorming – This variation can be used if participants are polarized, or if there is a need for confidentiality. Many people can participate when using this technique. The facilitator asks each participant to anonymously write down their idea(s) on a piece of paper or an index card, or a website. The facilitator reads each idea to the group and lists the ideas on the easel pads, or provides an electronic copy to the participants.

Roving Flip Charts – The questions are on easel charts posted around the room. Participants will rove in small groups from one chart to the next, writing down their input on the chart. This technique allows everyone to participate. The facilitator follows these steps:

1. Write one probing, open-ended question on each flip chart. Give each chart a number.
2. Place the charts around the room with space between them.
3. Place several markers at each flip chart.
4. Ask the participants to number off. There should be equal or fewer groups than charts. Each group should have no more than 10 participants in it.
5. Each group should go to the chart that corresponds with the number.
6. Ask everyone to stay at the chart until it is time to go to the next one.
7. They may write responses individually or as a group.
8. After 3 minutes, ask the participants to rotate to the next chart.

Continue until the participants have been to each chart.

Criteria Weighting

Purpose:
Criteria ranking is a tool to compare proposed alternatives quantitatively. Groups can rate each alternative using criteria that are relevant to a project and ultimately determine which solution best meets those criteria.

Process:
1. Establish criteria against which participants will rate the possible solutions. This can be done by a small group of experts, or in a brainstorming session with stakeholders.
2. Assign weights to the criteria by importance. The most important criteria will have the highest weight. This can be done, using brainstorming, a subcommittee, multi-voting, or another tool. In this example, “Cost” has the most “weight,” so it is the most important criteria. Criteria may have the same weight as another criterion in this example.
3. Give each participant a ballot as shown in Figure 2. Grade each solution on how well it meets the criterion. Use ballots, polling devices, or another tool to the alternatives. In this example, no two houses can be given the same grade within a criterion. For example, there can be only one C for cost, the one that costs the most.
4. Once each ballot is turned in, enter the grades for each person on the criteria tally sheet. Convert the grades to numbers using an education scale where A=4.0, B=3.0, and so on. Tally the results for each criterion as shown in Figure 3.
5. Enter the score for each criterion into the Criteria Grid, as shown in Figure 1.
6. Add the scores for the final total.
7. In the example below, there are 3 alternatives; the best alternative for that solution is given an A with a score of 243.
8. Ground truth the solution with the group. Develop action plans and implement the alternative with the highest total.

Example:
A family of four has narrowed the options for purchasing a house down to 3 houses and is evaluating the best house for them based on criteria they decided on together.

Figure 1 – Criteria Ranking Grid:

Options	House 1	House 2	House 3
Criteria (weight)			
Least Cost (5)	75	40	60
Bedrooms (4)	40	70	70
Bathrooms (3)	39	33	36
Neighborhood (3)	33	48	27
Schools (4)	56	40	48
Total Points	243	231	241

House 1 wins, House 3 is in the middle, and House 2 is last.

Figure 2 – Ballots:

Mom

Options	House 1	House 2	House 3
Criteria	Grade each house A, B or C on how well it meets the criteria Use each grade only once per row.		
Least Cost	A	C	B
Bedrooms	C	A	B
Bathrooms	A	B	C
Neighborhood	B	A	C
Schools	A	C	B

Dad

Options	House 1	House 2	House 3
Criteria	Grade each house A, B or C on how well it meets the criteria Use each grade only once per row.		
Least Cost	B	C	A
Bedrooms	C	A	B
Bathrooms	B	A	C
Neighborhood	B	A	C
Schools	C	B	A

Sister

Options	House 1	House 2	House 3
Criteria	Grade each house A, B or C on how well it meets the criteria Use each grade only once per row.		
Least Cost	A	B	C
Bedrooms	C	B	A
Bathrooms	B	C	A
Neighborhood	B	A	C
Schools	A	B	C

Brother

Options	House 1	House 2	House 3
Criteria	Grade each house A, B or C on how well it meets the criteria Use each grade only once per row.		
Least Cost	A	C	B
Bedrooms	C	B	A
Bathrooms	C	A	B
Neighborhood	C	A	B
Schools	A	C	B

Figure 3 – Tally Results:

Least Cost	Weight = 5		
	House 1	House 2	House 3
Mom	A	C	B
Dad	B	C	A
Sister	A	B	C
Brother	A	C	B
Total Score	15	9	12
Multiplied by weight	75	45	60

Bedroom	Weight = 4		
	House 1	House 2	House 3
Mom	C	A	B
Dad	C	A	B
Sister	C	B	A
Brother	C	B	A
Total Score	8	14	14
Multiplied by weight	40	70	70

Bathroom	Weight = 3		
	House 1	House 2	House 3
Mom	A	B	C
Dad	B	A	C
Sister	B	C	A
Brother	B	C	A
Total Score	13	11	12
Multiplied by weight	39	33	36

Neighborhood	Weight = 3		
	House 1	House 2	House 3
Mom	B	A	C
Dad	B	A	C
Sister	B	A	C
Brother	C	A	B
Total Score	11	16	9
Multiplied by weight	33	48	27

Schools	Weight = 4		
	House 1	House 2	House 3
Mom	A	C	B
Dad	C	B	A
Sister	A	B	C
Brother	A	C	B
Total Score	14	10	12
Multiplied by weight	56	40	48

Exit Survey

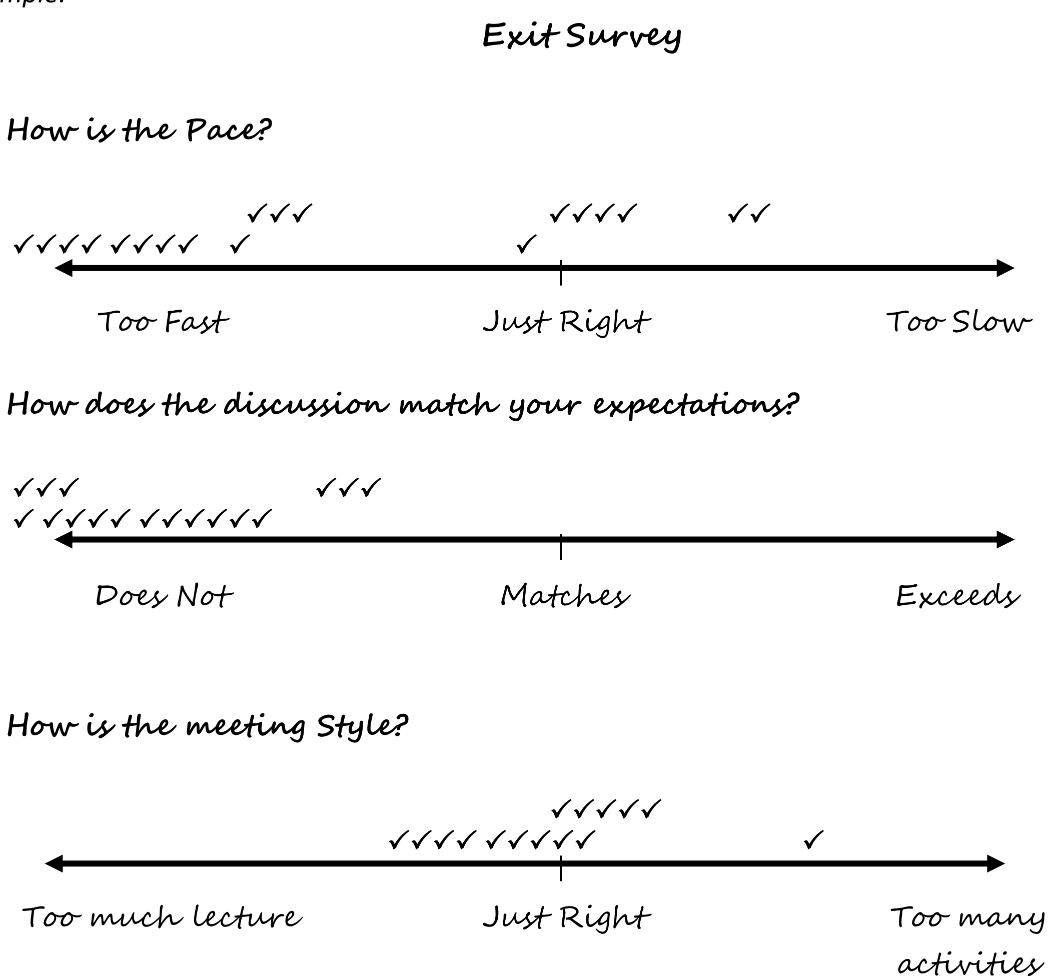
Purpose:

The exit survey allows the facilitator to take the pulse of the participants at breaks or before the next meeting. This strategy provides opportunities for discussion by allowing the participants to anonymously speak up about something that is not working for them, and it will build buy-in to the process by giving participants a chance to comment.

Process:

1. Write two or three questions on an easel pad, with a scale. When using this tool during a meeting, ask questions that can be addressed during the meeting. Alternatively, use this at the end of the meeting to inform the process for the next meeting.
2. Ask participants to use a marker to place a check mark on the scale as they leave the room.
3. When the participants return, discuss the results with them.
4. Allow them to expand upon their responses, and make adjustments as necessary.
5. Be careful not to give extra weight to the outlier responses.

Example:



Electronic Polling

Purpose:
Electronic polling using mobile phones or polling devices allows participants to anonymously rank, prioritize or provide feedback using an electronic devise. Everyone can participate, and the results can been viewed as they come in.

Process:
Depending on the available equipment or service, this will change. A quick google search of audience polling services will return several.

Flip Charting

Purpose:

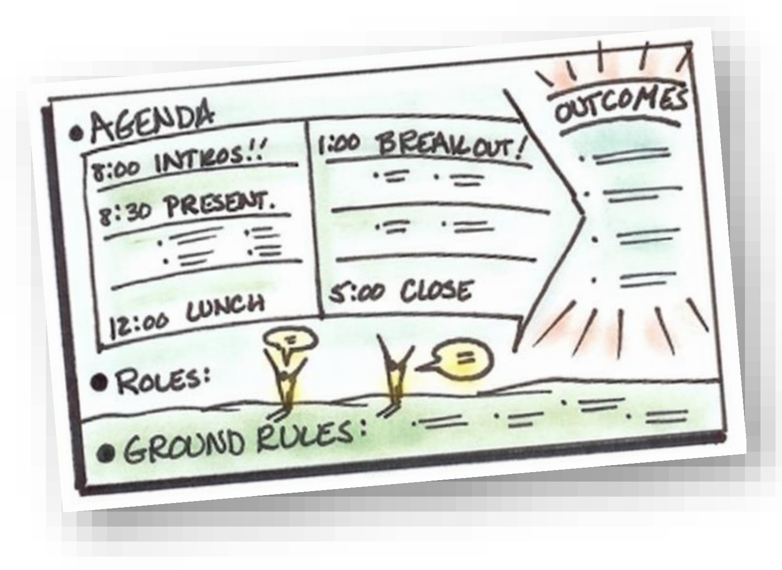
Using an easel and pad, the recorder can write down comments from the participants for review later. This allows participants to review the agreements at their own pace, recognize that they have been heard and speak up if they have been misunderstood. It allows participants to see and hear other's input.

Process:

- Position the flip chart where everyone can see it.
- Stand to the side while writing. Face the audience while listening. If doing both, do not face the flip chart squarely—stand at an angle to both.
- Write in large block letters (1–1.5-inches high).
- Use as few words as possible.
- Make sure everyone knows what any abbreviations mean.
- Highlight key words or ideas by circling, underlining, boxing, or starring them.
- Don't worry about spelling. State that spell check is not on!
- Color can make a difference. Ensure that the markers have plenty of ink and are dark enough to be seen by everyone in the room.
- Alternating colors allows participants to tell at a glance when one thought stopped and the next began.
- Placing a border around your chart can help your audience focus on what is written.
- Using graphics to demonstrate points can assist the audience with remembering the points.

Variation:

Graphic facilitation is a technique that uses drawings as well as words to capture the notes. It allows participants to relate through another type of charting. This may be difficult for some facilitators, although many of the charts can be developed before the meeting, and simple graphics, like bullets, can be applied by most recorders. To host a course that teaches facilitators how to listen, process, and draw, contact "ocm.training.request@noaa.gov"



Forced Ranking

Purpose:
This tool is for prioritizing options using specific criteria where each participant has input.

Process:
1. Write the criteria to be considered at the top of the chart.
2. List all of the alternatives in a column below the criteria, and number them.
3. Ask participants to rank the alternatives from best to worst as it relates to the criteria.
4. Using round robin, ask each participant to tell you where in the ranking Alternative 1 is.
5. Place that number under the rank. (If the participant says: "I put it 3rd" write 3 under rank).
6. Ask the next participant where they placed alternative 1. Add that rank to the first participant's.
7. Continue in the manner until you have numbers for each of the participants next to the first alternative.
8. Move to alternative 2 and repeat steps 4-7. Continue through all the alternatives.
9. When all the alternatives have been listed, add up each row and record the total.
10. The winner is the alternative with the lowest number.

Variation:
Anonymous Forced Ranking should be used if the participants are private about their ranks. Use ballots instead of round robin.

Criteria = Least Cost

Most Impact	**Rank**	**Total**
House 1	**3 + 1+ 1+ 2**	**= 7**
House 2	**1 + 2+ 3 +3**	**= 9**
House 3	**2 + 3+ 2+ 1**	**= 8**

Gantt Chart

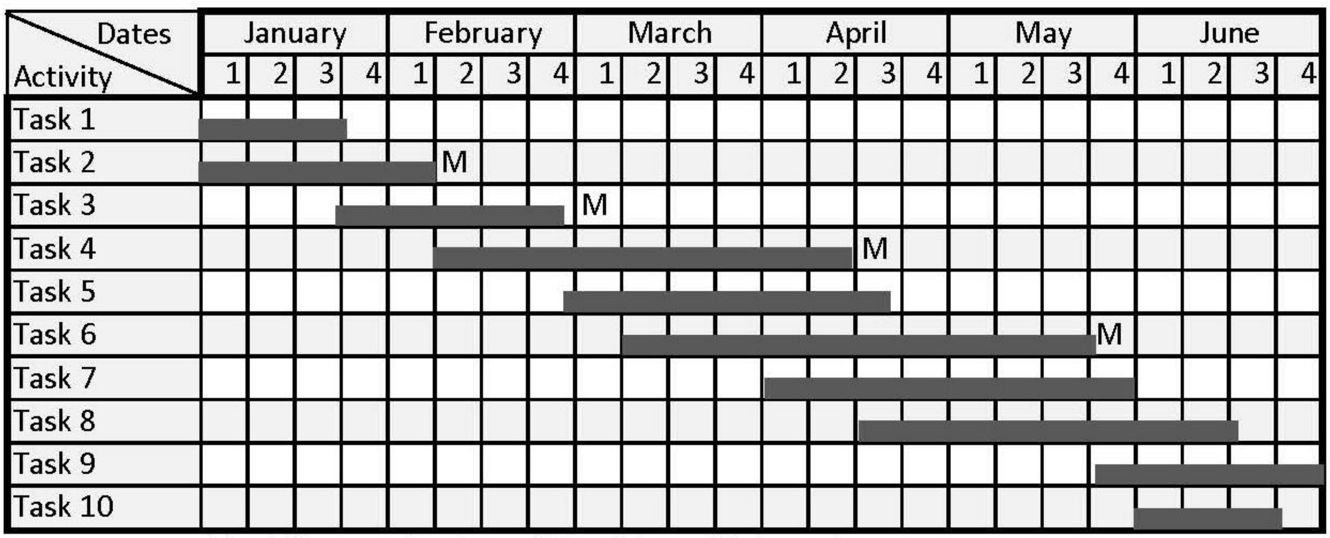
Purpose: The Gantt chart is a project scheduling tool. It can be used to determine when project tasks must be complete and which tasks are dependent on others. Placing milestones into the chart allows the project team to evaluate the progress of the project.

Process:

1. Break the project down into tasks.
2. Estimate the time for each task.
3. Determine the sequence of the tasks.
4. List the tasks in the first column of the chart.
5. Draw a bar from the task start time to the completion.
6. Place the milestones into the chart.

Example:

Gantt Chart



M = Milestone Project will be delayed if these dates are not met

Ground Rules

Purpose: Ground rules are used so the group can agree on how they will interact with each other during the meeting or process. This is a great facilitator tool when disrupting behaviors of taking the meeting off track.

Process:
The ground rules can be established by the facilitator and the planning team before the meeting if group buy-in is not necessary to the success of the meeting. Large public meetings often state the ground rules without gaining input. The leader or a planning group may develop rules before the meeting, and ask the group for input at the meeting if there is not a lot of time to develop the rules and the issue is not contentious. If there will be a long process, where the group must work together to solve a problem, the group members should develop all the rules at the first meeting.

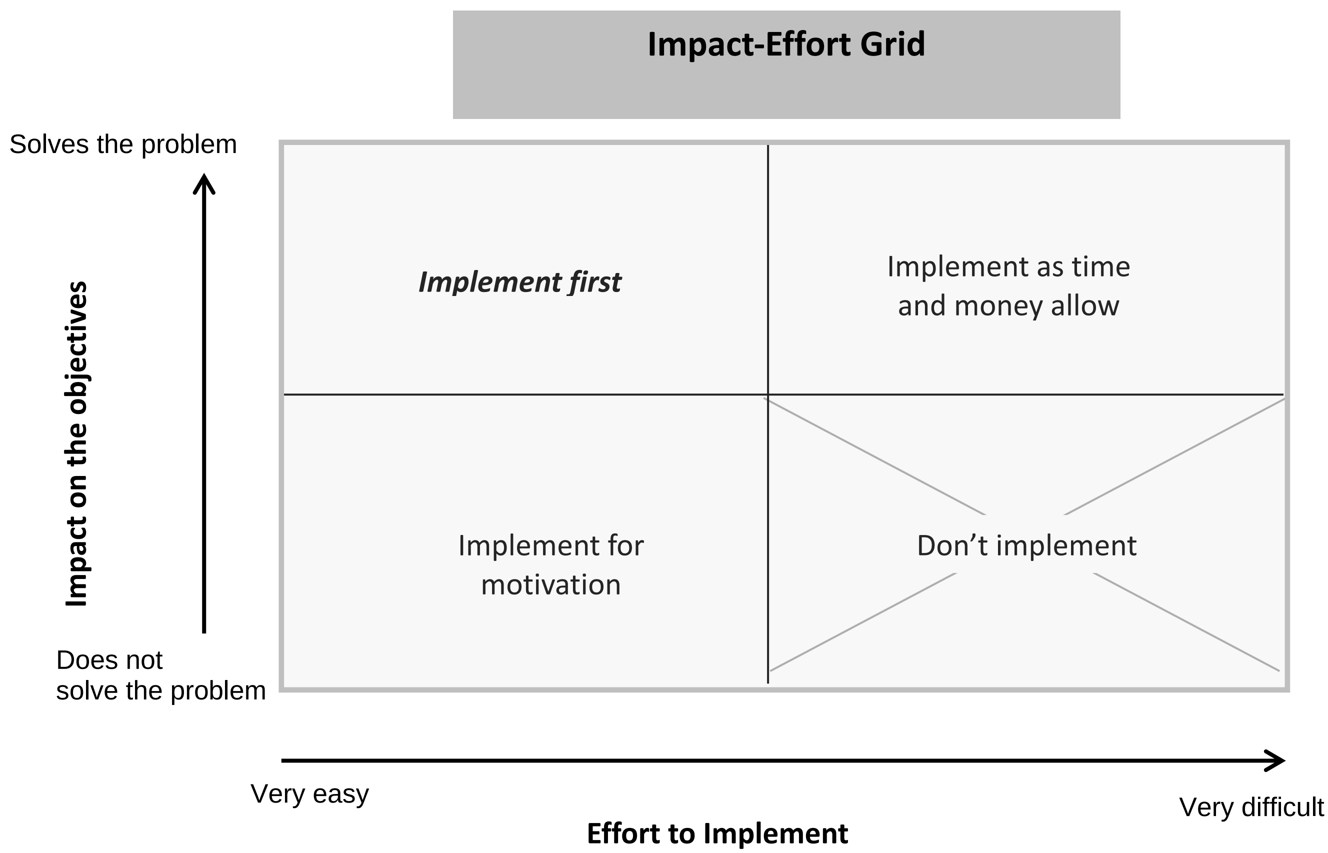
Impact-Effort Grid

Purpose: Impact-effort grids allow participants to see how each alternative might be prioritized for implementation. Participants rank each alternative, either individually or as a group, to see where it falls in the grid.

Process:

1. Participants rate the impact each alternative will have on the outcomes, will it solve the problem or not. This can be done using electronic polling, with dots that are averaged or any other technique such as roving flip charts or exit survey.
2. This works best if the participants are only given two choices, it solve the problem or it does not. Then the choice falls within the grid. Further refinement can take place after the solutions are sorted.
3. Participants rate the effort it will take to implement each alternative, using the tools listed in step 1 above. Defining effort is important; in order to rank the alternatives, participants need to know what effort means. This can be cost, time, inconvenience or some other qualifier.
4. Using the ratings, the alternatives are placed into one of the four quadrants. For example, if an alternative will have a large impact on the objectives, and it is low effort, it will be written in the upper-left quadrant. This quadrant is low hanging fruit and should be implemented first.

Example:



Multi-voting

Purpose: This tool is used to prioritize lists. Every participant can provide input on the priorities.

Process:

1. Post the list of alternatives for everyone to see.
2. Give each participant a specified number of dots. The quantity will vary based on the number of alternatives that are being prioritized. The general rule of 3 is to divide the number of alternatives by 3, and round to the nearest integer. So if you have 14 choices, each participant will have 5 dots.
3. Setting ground rules for this activity is important.
4. Consider how many dots a participant can put on any one option. The disadvantage to allowing more than one dot per alternative is if that alternative doesn't rise to the final list, the participant may feel less bought into the results. Consider asking participants to put a number on their dots to avoid dot trading, dot loading (several dots on one alternative).
5. Working individually, participants post the dots next to the preferred alternative to indicate their preferences.
6. Tally the results for the priority list.

Variations:

Anonymous Prioritizing – Provide anonymity by asking participants to write down the top three choices on index cards and turn them in for tallying. This avoids dot bias, dot trading, and peer pressure.

Participatory Mapping

Purpose: Allow participants to visually show others what is important to them. This tool is especially useful in addressing problems that have a geospatial component (such as land use planning) or a physical or structural component (such as building design). It allows the participants to visualize the issue, share their visions, and consider alternative solutions.

Process:

1. Divide the participants into groups of 8-10 people.
2. Give each group a map or drawing of the area for discussion.
3. Provide each group with a stack of blue and a stack of yellow (or any two colors) Post-it notes.
4. Participants write the names of (most important) places that they want to protect on Post-it notes, one place per note.
5. Participants write the names of alternative solutions on different color Post-it notes, one solution per note.
6. Participants stick Post-it notes on the map in appropriate places.
7. Use the information on the maps to develop solutions, begin conversations about potential conflicts, or inform policies.

Variations:
Group Art – If the issue does not have a geospatial component, provide butcher paper and allow participants to draw their input.

Charettes are an intense design session in which a team concentrates on a particular problem and proposes solutions. It is an active approach that involves learning by doing. It often involves architects and engineers to support the community as they develop community planning projects such as new planning and zoning ordinances, or new developments.

Perspective Swap

Purpose: Understand another point of view and hear your perspective described by another. All perspectives in the room will be known to each participant.

Process:

1. Facilitator asks participants to pair off.
2. Pairs discuss what they each have to gain by addressing the issue.
3. After each person has shared with his or her partner, participants reconvene into larger group.
4. In round-robin format, each participant shares the partner's perspective on the issue and what the partner has to gain by participating.
5. Facilitator records responses on an easel pad.
6. Facilitator leads a discussion to ensure understanding of all perspectives.

Variation:

After the pairs discuss each perspective, time is called and each pair finds another pair. The two pairs chat briefly, sharing all four perspectives, each person introducing their partner. Once all perspectives have been shared, each person gets a new partner within the foursome and then the new pairs go off and find another pair. This is repeated until each participant has introduced five other participants in a structured networking activity.

Adapt the discussion to the circumstance. Pairs might discuss what they value about the alternatives, what they would like to see happen, etc.

Process Agenda

Purpose: The process (facilitator) agenda describes how the meeting will proceed, and what will be accomplished in each session. It includes the same information as the content agenda with additional information that the facilitator (or meeting leader) needs to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly. Process agendas should include the following information:

- Overall goal of the meeting, and any desired outputs.
- Objectives for each session.
- Who will speak, and run each session.
- The process that will be used to accomplish each objective.
- Supplies that will be needed to perform the process (e.g., easel pads, markers, Post-it notes, dots)
- Timing and the estimated duration for each step in the process

Process:

1. Determine the meeting goal and outputs.
    a. Example: Goal is to solve the problem, the output is the solution
2. Determine what needs to be accomplished in order to reach the goal.
    b. Example: understand the skills each person can apply to the solution.
3. State these accomplishments in terms of objectives.
    c. Example: Participants will share their skills with other participants
4. Establish one session in the meeting for each objective.
    d. See agenda below
5. Once the meeting's objectives are laid out, determine how much time can be dedicated to each session.
    e. 30 min to learn skills
6. Determine what tool or technique will be used to meet the objective.
    f. Example: Perspective Swap variation
7. Develop the question that will be used and the explanation to initiate the process.
    g. Example: What unique skill do you have to address this problem?
8. Note all activities that will be done during the session.
    h. Example: There are 6 listed in the example agenda below
9. Estimate the time to complete each activity.
    i. Example: Step 2 is 5 min which in annotated at the end of the directions in parenthesis.
10. Add the times, and fill in the total time.
11. Fill in supplies needed and determine who will lead each session.

Variations:

Class room curriculum

Table 1: Example of a partially completed process agenda

<table>
<tr><td>Time

Leader</td><td>Process Agenda Example
Activities and Objectives

Meeting Goal and Output: A solution to the problem</td><td>Materials</td></tr>
<tr><td>8:00 -8:10

Leader</td><td>Welcome and Introduction
Objective: Participants know who is in the room, and who they represent
Tool: Round Robin
Activities:
1. Ask everyone to write their first name in large letters on both sides of the name tent.
2. Beginning with the person to your right, ask him/her to state their name and affiliation.
3. Continue around the table in order until all participants have stated their name and affiliation.
Time=10min</td><td>Name tents

Markers</td></tr>
<tr><td>8:10-8:40

Facilitator</td><td>Introduction to Skills
Objective: Participants will understand the skills in the room.

Process Tool: Skill Swap (a variation of Perspective Swap)

Activities:
1. Facilitator asks participants to partner with the person across from them and ask: What unique skill do you have to address this problem? (1 min)
2. Participants pair off and each person shares their skill with the partner. (5 min)
3. Facilitator asks participants reconvene into larger group (1 min)
4. In round-robin format, each participant shares his or her partner’s perspective on the issue and what the partner has to gain by participating (15 min)
5. Facilitator records responses on an easel pad (ongoing)
6. Facilitator leads a discussion to ensure understanding of all perspectives (8 min)

Total Time: 30 min</td><td>Markers (at least two colors that are easily seen by the audience)

Easel pad</td></tr>
<tr><td>8:40-9:30

Facilitator</td><td>Understanding the issue
Objective: Participants will develop a problem statement together.

Process Tool: Problem Statement Template</td><td>Problem statement form</td></tr>
</table>

	Activities: *1.* Ask participants to review the problem statement form, and jot notes in each section. (5 min) 2. Ask each question and captures the input on the charts until each participant is satisfied that their answer has been captured (15 min) 3. Review the chart and ask someone to consider all the information and develop a strawman problem statement. (5 min) 4. Ask one person to share their strawman. (3 min) 5. Type the strawman onto the screen (1 min) 6. Set ground rules: a. No word smithing, questionable words will be highlighted for the editor b. Leave spelling grammar and punctuation to the editor. c. Leave your position outside the room, instead review for your issues. d. Participate in the discussion so that the problem statement is a good one. (1 min) 7. Ask the group to raise the hands if they want to change anything in the strawman. (20 min) 8. Capture responses on the screen. 9. Allow input until it becomes repetitive or circular. 10. Ask if everyone sees their issues in the statement without feeling polarized. 11. Is this our problem statement? 12. Let them know you will share the information with the editor during break for review. **Total Time: 50 min**	Easel with paper Markers Screen Projector Lap top Recorder
9:30-9:45	**Break**	
9:45-12:00	**Solutions** *Objective:* Participants will develop solutions to the problem together.	
12:00-1:00	**Lunch**	

Table 2: Process Agenda Template

Time	**Activities and Objectives**	**Setup and Materials**
	Meeting Goal and Output:	
Start time Who will lead? Who will assist? End time	**Objective:** **Activities:** **Total time = minutes**	What materials are needed?
Start time Who will lead? Who will assist? End time	**Objective:** **Activities:** **Total time = minutes**	What materials are needed?

Add as many sections as needed to accommodate the objectives and sessions.

Ten-Minute Priorities

(Adapted from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* by Senge, et al. 1994.)

Purpose:
Ten-Minute Priorities lets you compare alternatives against each other and pick the best one that addresses specific criteria. This one is useful if you have a lot of alternatives.

Process:
1. Decide on your criteria for evaluating the best option
2. In each small square on the worksheet (see below), circle the number corresponding to the strategy you prefer, using your agreed upon criteria.
3. Enter the number of times you voted for each strategy in Column A.
4. Add the group's points from Column A and list in Column B.
5. The higher the number, the more preferred option based on the selected criteria.

Example:
A family of four has narrowed the options for purchasing a house down to 5 houses and is evaluating the best house for them based on the criteria: **<u>location</u>**. Each family member completes the worksheet. This is how the Mom completes the sheet:

1 2	Mom prefers the location of house 1 as compared to house 2

1 3	2 3	Mom prefers the location of house 1 as compared to house 3 and prefers the location of house 3 as compared to house 2

1 4	2 4	3 4

1 5	2 5	3 5	4 5

Alternative Strategies	A Mom's Points	B The Family's Totals
House 1	3	15
House 2	0	2
House 3	2	9
House 4	3	10
House 5	2	4

The houses that will be considered, based on location, are houses 1 and 4, with house 1 scoring the highest, based on location.

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