

FACILITATING EFFECTIVE GROUP OUTCOMES

Presented by:


Dan Kahl – Assistant Professor

Ron Hustedde – Professor

Lori Garkovich – Professor

Lissa Pohl – Program & Outreach Associate

GOALS FOR TODAY'S WORKSHOP

- Explore how groups make decisions
 - Provide resources and skills for creating more effective councils
 - Have fun learning about and supporting each other!
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FALSE CONSENSUS

Taking a Trip to Abilene

The Abilene Paradox occurs when group members take an action or "go to Abilene" when no one really wants to go. Essentially, it is the inability of group members to handle agreement. It occurs frequently in organizations.

Reasons for False Consensus

1. Fear of not belonging to the group
2. Failure to communicate their real desires or beliefs to one another
3. Working with invalid and inaccurate information
4. Inability to see the value of different perspectives and to question one's own view point

Avoiding the Pitfalls of False Consensus:

1. Openly recognize that differences and conflict strengthen organizations;
2. Individuals should be encouraged to express their differences with each other;
3. Intentionally seeks voices that may be different - voices that can offer fresh ideas;
4. Systematically examine the negative and positive consequences of its proposed actions;
5. Make links with other groups that have other perspectives.

The Role of Extension Councils

- Identify issues and opportunities that serve as a basis for the county Extension program's Plan of Work
- Determine program priorities, content areas and annual goals
- Communicate and promote Extension program opportunities to the public, organizations and governing bodies
- Getting to Consensus

Challenges of Extension Councils

- Special Interests by individuals and organizations
- Executing programs – differing ideas of the best way to do it
- False Consensus
- ??????????

WAYS OF THINKING

Single Idea

The diagram illustrates a progression of thinking. It starts with 'Single Idea' on the left. Two arrows branch out from this point towards 'Multiple Ideas' in the center. From 'Multiple Ideas', two more arrows branch out towards 'Divergent thinking' on the right. The text 'Divergent thinking' is accompanied by several parallel diagonal lines on the right side of the slide.

Multiple Ideas

Divergent thinking

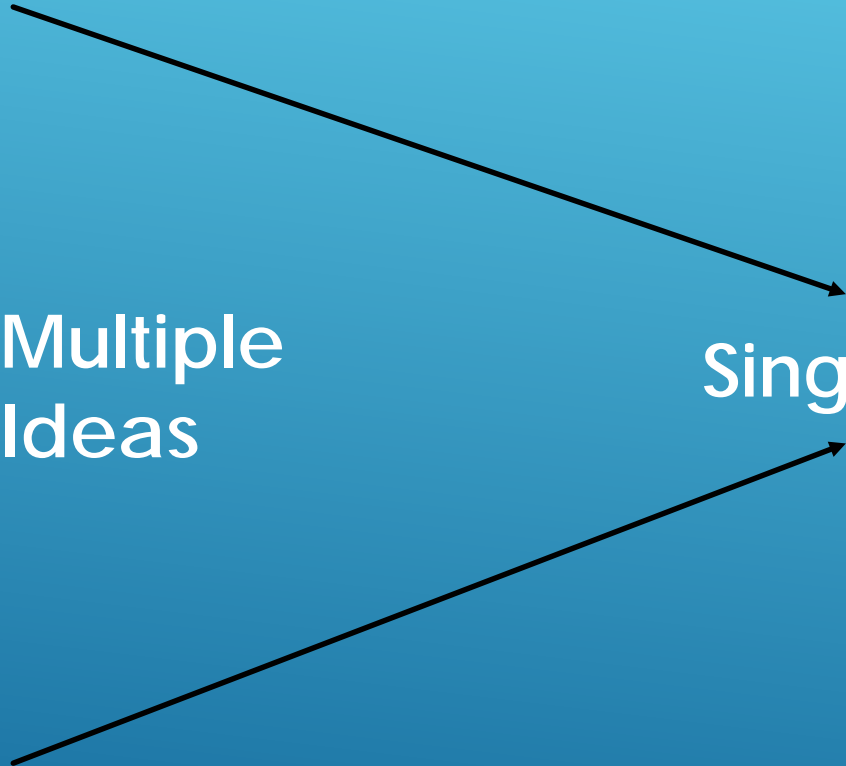
Kaner, S., Lind, L., Toldj, C., Fisk, S., & Berger, D. (2014). *Facilitators Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. Third Edition. Jossey-Bass Publishing.

WAYS OF THINKING

Convergent
thinking

Multiple
Ideas

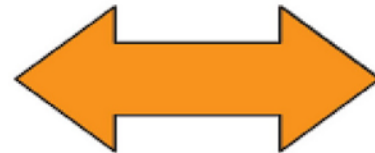
Single decision



Different Ways of Thinking

Divergent Thinking

- Think *around* or *away from* the problem
- Discontinuity / break
- “Dig another hole”
- Spontaneous, informal, random
- Remove constraints
- Sub-conscious processes

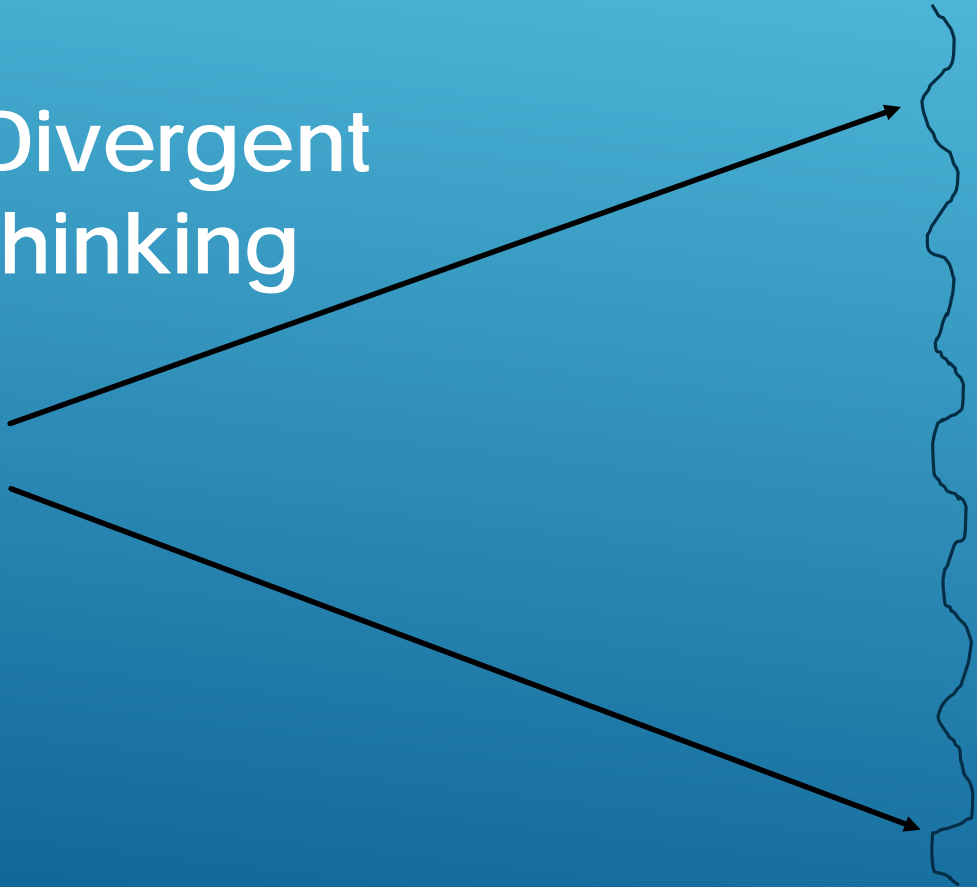


Convergent Thinking

- Think *through* or *into* the problem
- Continuity
- “Dig a deeper hole”
- Systematic, formal, focused
- Work within constraints
- Conscious processes

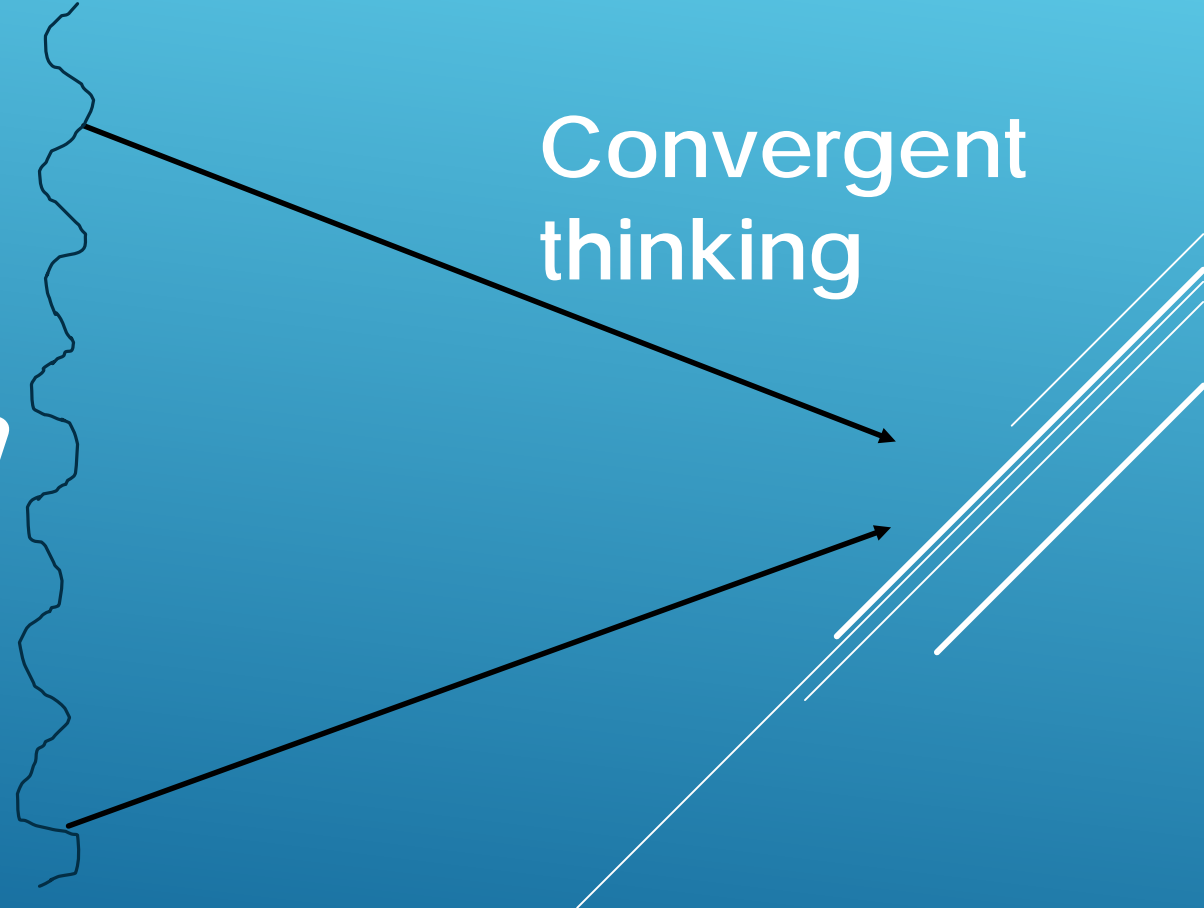
WAYS OF THINKING

Divergent
thinking

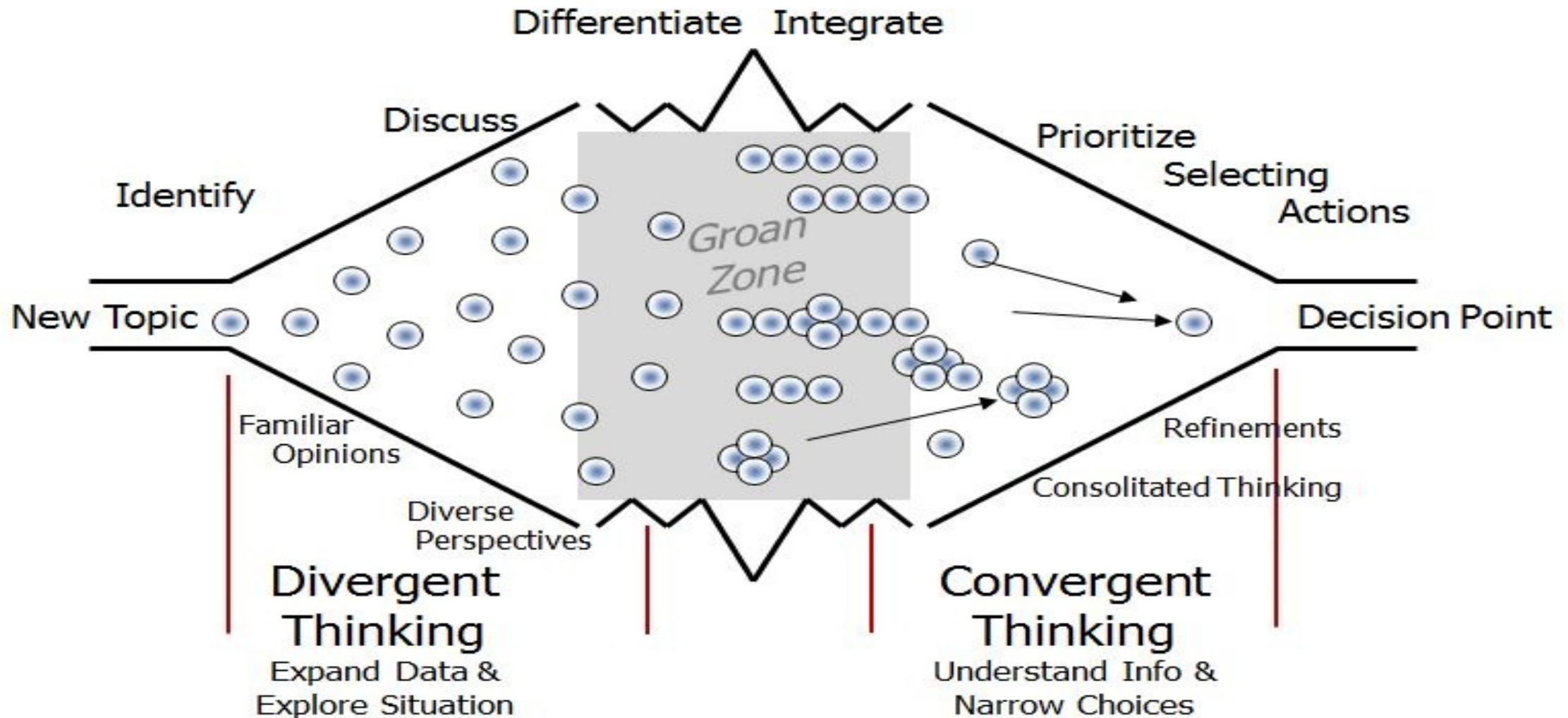


Groan
Zone


Convergent
thinking



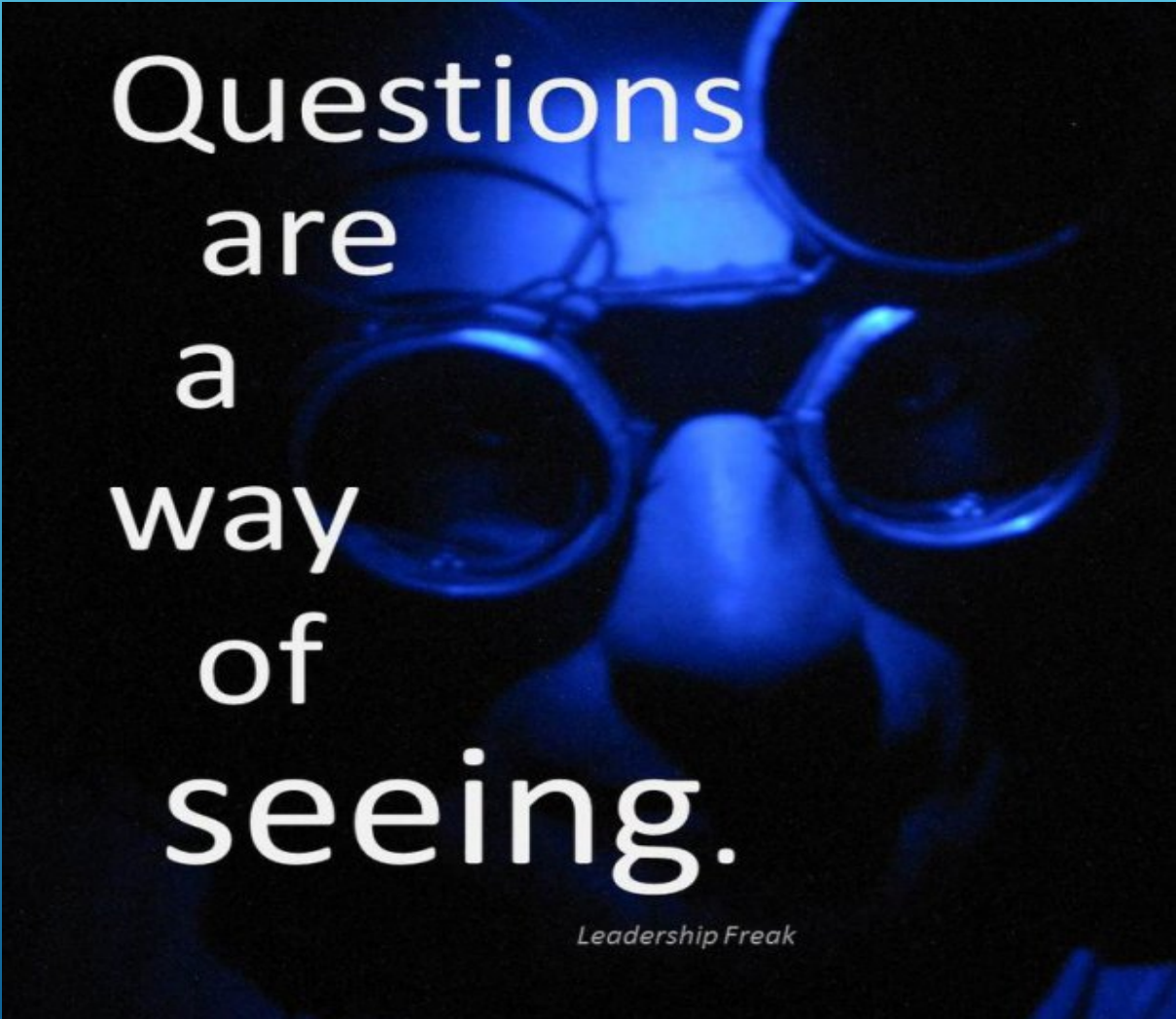
Dynamics of Group Decision Making



WAYS TO ENCOURAGE DIVERGENT THINKING

- ▶ Using Powerful Questions
 - ▶ Brain Storming All Ideas
 - ▶ No Self-Censorship
 - ▶ Suspending Judgment
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The Art of Effective Questions



Questions
are
a
way
of
seeing.

Leadership Freak

Effective
Questioning



Develops
Thinking Skills

Often we don't think about how different types of questions can lead to different outcomes.

You should steer a conversation by asking the right kinds of question, based on the problem you are trying to solve.


In some cases, you will want to expand your view of the problem, rather than keeping it narrowly focused.

Asking effective questions is the key to opening the door to knowledge and understanding


- ▶ Information exchange
- ▶ Framing an issue so people can find consensus solutions
- ▶ Defusing conflicts by obtaining clarifications
- ▶ Building relationships
- ▶ Helping others to learn
- ▶ Challenging our assumptions
- ▶ Avoiding obstructive patterns of thinking
- ▶ Identifying action options
- ▶ Weighing the costs and benefits of different options



WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS?

- ▶ **Phrase positively**
 - ▶ **Push creative thinking**
 - ▶ **Open-ended**
 - ▶ **Ask "what" or "how"**
 - ▶ **Not biased**
 - ▶ **Not blaming**
 - ▶ **Not leading questions**
 - ▶ **Not "why" questions**
- 

Effective learning questions that can serve as a starting point for creating learning opportunities:

- ▶ What went well and why?
 - ▶ What went less well and why?
 - ▶ What would we do differently now?
 - ▶ What would we do the same way?
 - ▶ What went much better than we expected and why?
 - ▶ What went much worse than we expected and why?
 - ▶ Are there new assumptions/rules to be made?
 - ▶ Why did we not foresee what happened?
 - ▶ How can we improve learning in the future?
- 

CREATIVE THINKING QUESTIONS

- ▶ What would exist that does not exist now?
- ▶ What would be happening that does not happen now?
- ▶ What decisions would be made and executed?
- ▶ What accomplishments would be in place that are not now?
- ▶ What patterns of behavior that are currently in place would be eliminated?

CONVERGENT QUESTIONS

Are used to get at the criteria for judging and ranking the options.
Are typically questions that narrow the options available:

Examples are:

- What is the one idea that encompasses most of what we want to accomplish?
- What type of evaluation system will we use to know if our choice achieved our desired outcome(s)?
- What are the resources available to us to accomplish our goal?
- How easy or difficult will it be to achieve our plan?
- What are the costs associated with our top three ideas?

Understanding the art and science of asking effective questions is critical to assisting clients succeed and becoming a trusted advisor. The questions we ask of others and of ourselves largely determine the quality of our interactions, The effectiveness of our solutions, the exactness of our evaluation and the breadth of our creativity. As you master skills for asking effective questions you will enter into more mutually beneficial and long-lasting relationships and will create more value for your client and yourself.

MAHAN KHALSA

Based on Mahan Khalsa's book, *Let's Get Real or Let's Not Play*

GRADIENT OF AGREEMENT or MODIFIED CONSENSUS

The intent of modified consensus is to find the most agreeable solution for all members of a group.

Modified consensus walks through a series of amendments to find the most agreeable alternative.

GRADIENT OF AGREEMENT or MODIFIED CONSENSUS



Block – Cannot support

Low support for the idea

Moderate support

Solid support

High support

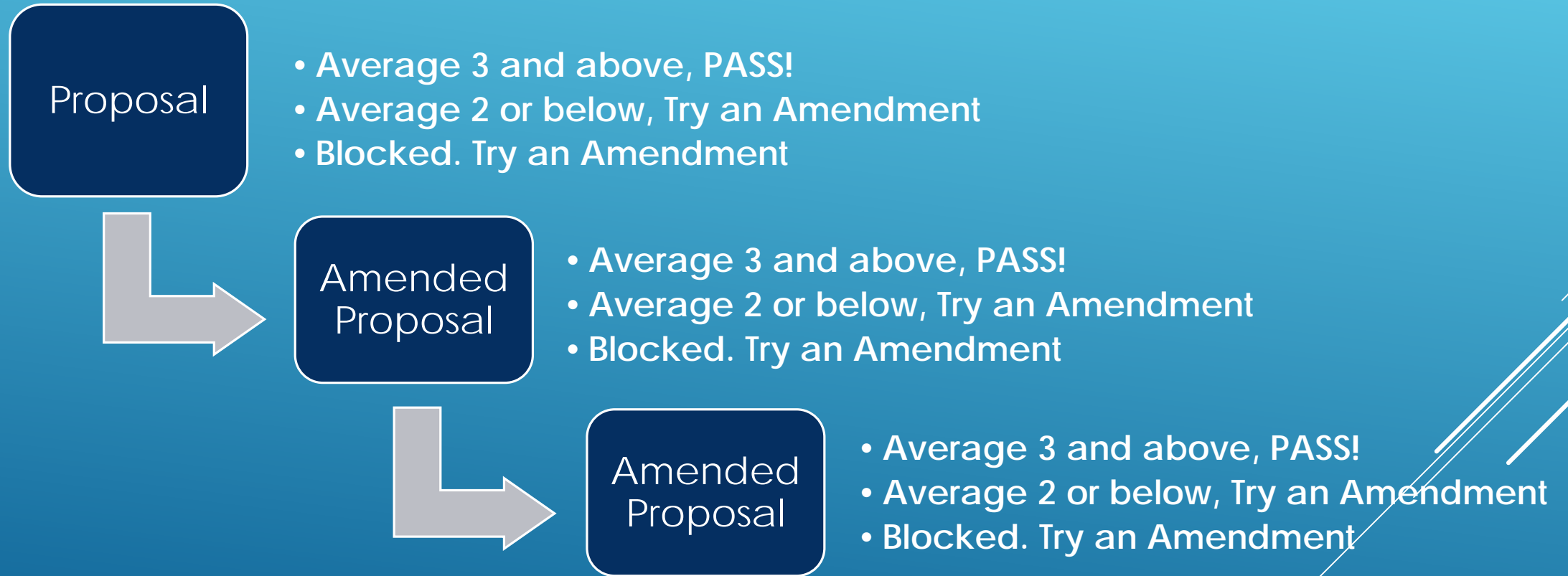
Full support
Best Idea EVER!

GENERAL RULES of MODIFIED CONSENSUS

- Propose a clearly stated proposal.
- Group members indicate their level of support (0-5)
- Anyone can BLOCK, but if so, person must suggest an alternative solution. If the blocker cannot give an alternative, they cannot block – (there must be a reason for not agreeing and an alternate proposal/ suggestion made.)
- Review the implications of the new proposal and vote again

In MOST cases, this process will improve group decision making.

WORKING A MODIFIED CONSENSUS PROCESS



DESIGNING MORE CIVIL DISCUSSIONS IN YOUR COUNCIL

What will you do differently in your council based on what you learned today?

What 3 action steps will you take back to your council?
Why?



EXTENSION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Over the past two years, CLD/CEDIK has put together a series of professional development workshops for extension agents that include:

Extension Core Training:

- Effective Communication
- Leadership
- Working with Elected Officials
- Facilitation Basics

EXTENSION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Advanced Facilitation skills
 - ▶ Hosting community conversations
 - ▶ Group dynamics
 - ▶ Community analysis
 - ▶ Conflict resolution
 - ▶ Community power dynamics
 - ▶ Power, influence and ethical challenges
 - ▶ Asset mapping and leading community change
 - ▶ Framing public issues and public deliberation
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INFORMATION AND TRAINING RESOURCES

More information and training resources
can be found at :

CEDIK – www.cedik.ca.uky.edu

CLD – www.cld.ca.uky.edu

UK Extension – www.extension.ca.uky.edu