

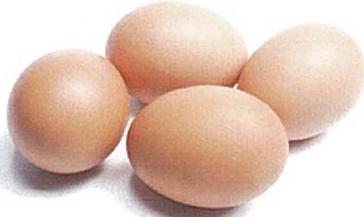
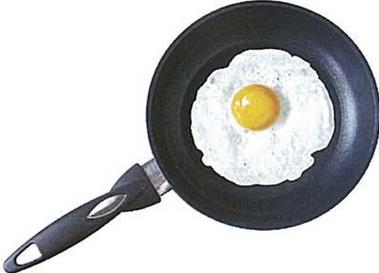
Facilitate Agreement

Agreements enable people to work together in the pursuit of a common goal. By demonstrating how to build understanding and agreement, facilitative leaders encourage teamwork and set a collaborative stand for the entire organization.



Content and Process Agreements

The products of successful collaborative efforts (e.g., decisions, plans) are based on a series of content and process agreements. Content is the subject matter or the topic being considered. Process is the way content is managed or treated.

(WHAT)	(HOW)
	

The nature and quality of the product (e.g., the egg) differ depending upon the production process.

Facilitative leaders increase the likelihood of a successful outcome by identifying what agreements must be made and facilitating the agreement building process.

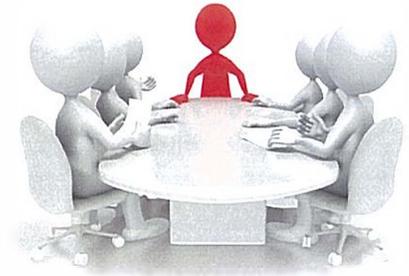


Examples:

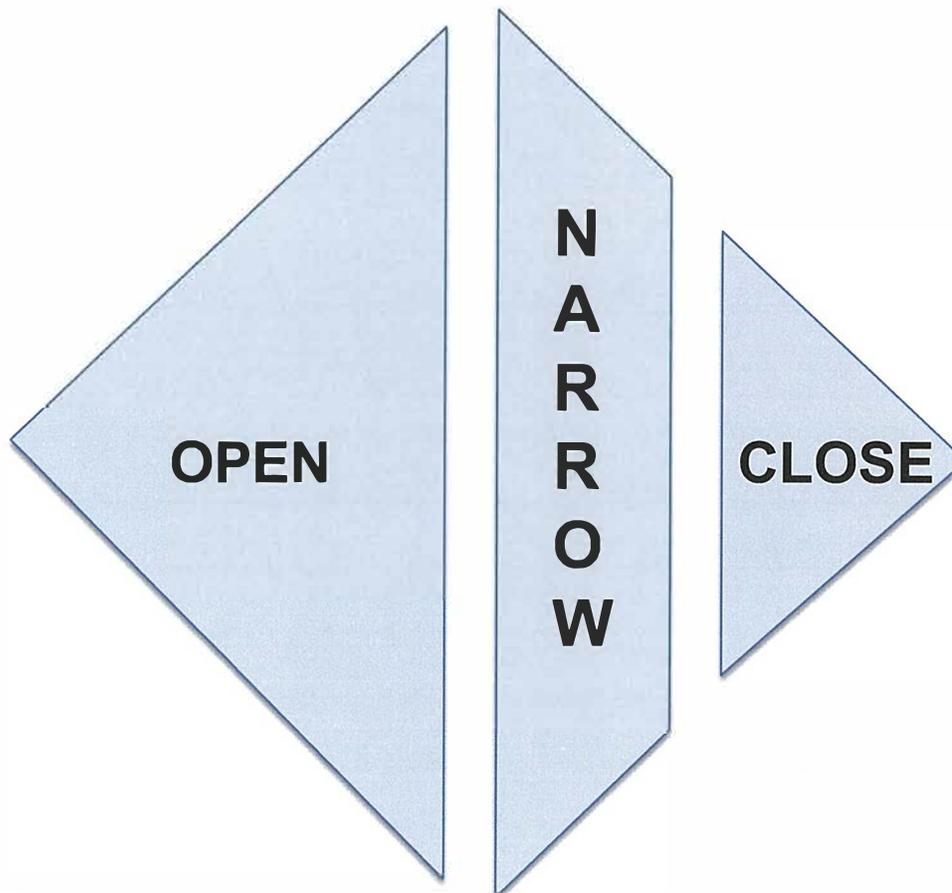
CONTENT AGREEMENTS	PROCESS AGREEMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether or not to purchase new playground equipment. • What criteria will be used for hiring new teachers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How decisions will be made. • How meetings will be conducted.

Stages of a Discussion

In a meeting, participants open, narrow and close on different topics, building small agreements as they go along. Leaders facilitate agreement by keeping people focused on the task at hand and guiding the process through each stage.



Three Stages of a Discussion



OPEN

People offer ideas, opinions or information.

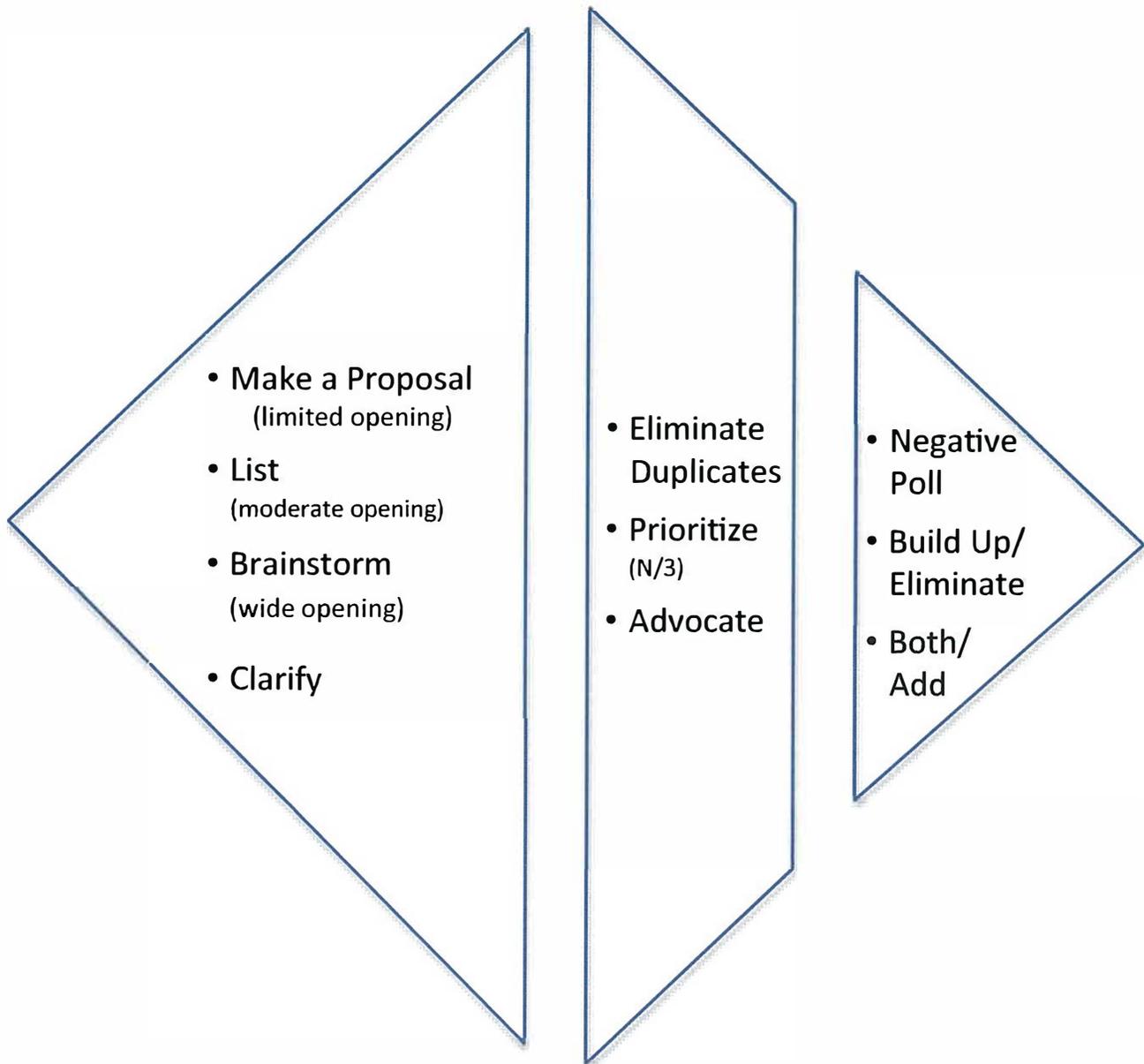
NARROW

The information is organized for better understanding and/or is evaluated.

CLOSE

Specific proposals are refined and agreements are made; other information is set aside for future discussion.

Tools for Reaching Agreement



- **Make a Proposal**
(limited opening)
- **List**
(moderate opening)
- **Brainstorm**
(wide opening)
- **Clarify**

Opening Tools

To generate and clarify information and ideas

- **Eliminate Duplicates**
- **Prioritize**
(N/3)
- **Advocate**

Narrowing Tools

To organize and evaluate the information

- **Negative Poll**
- **Build Up/ Eliminate**
- **Both/ Add**

Closing Tools

To reconcile differences and reach agreement

Tools for Reaching Agreement

Stage	Tool	Purpose	Example of Things to Say or Do
OPEN	Make a Proposal (limited opening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a suggestion or offer for others to consider To get the discussion started 	<p><i>"Jim, you have thought a lot about this issue. Please share your proposal to address this issue."</i></p> <p><i>"Who has an issue for the group to consider? Tell us about it, please."</i></p>
	List (moderate opening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide or generate a short inventory of ideas for the group to consider 	<p><i>"Let's list 4 or 5 items that need to be addressed immediately."</i></p> <p><i>"I have a list of 4 potential solutions. Let's add 2 or 3 more and then begin the narrowing process."</i></p>
	Brainstorm (wide opening) Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All ideas are OK. Defer evaluation. Build on others' ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To open the group's creative energy To produce as many ideas as possible without evaluating To generate many ideas in a short period of time 	<p><i>"First, we are going to get all our ideas without evaluating them."</i></p> <p><i>"Let's come up with about 20 ideas in the next 10 minutes."</i></p>
	Clarify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make sure each participant understands the meaning of each idea <u>before</u> the group is asked to evaluate ideas or make decisions 	<p><i>"Let's take thirty minutes to review the list of ideas we have just generated. Which ones need to be clarified? Does everyone now understand these ideas?"</i></p>

Tools for Reaching Agreement

(continued)

Stage	Tool	Purpose	Example of Things to Say or Do
NARROW	Eliminate Duplicates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To eliminate redundancy 	<p><i>"We have about 20 ideas here. Are there any that are exactly the same or nearly exact?"</i></p> <p><i>"Are we able to eliminate either one?"</i></p> <p><i>"Jane, you proposed this 'duplicate' item. Do you agree with deleting it from the list?"</i></p>
	Prioritize (N/3) N/3: number of items divided by 3 = number of votes per participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To get a "sense" for which choices the group thinks are most important without actually making a final selection or decision 	<p><i>"Let's try ranking these ideas to see how much agreement there is. We will assign a letter to each one. There are 12 solutions, so each of you may select for the four options you like best. Okay, how many for item A? How many for item B?"</i></p>
	Advocate/Examine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To uncover the rationale and strengths of a specific option To explore the pros and cons of various options and evaluate them To examine the various factors that impact decision-making 	<p><i>"We have several options remaining. Let's take a few minutes to influence each other's thinking. Bob, why do you think option C is a good choice?"</i></p> <p><i>"What would be some of the barriers we would face in adopting option G?"</i></p> <p><i>"If we decided and agreed upon item M, what would need to be done to ensure its success?"</i></p>

Tools for Reaching Agreement

(continued)

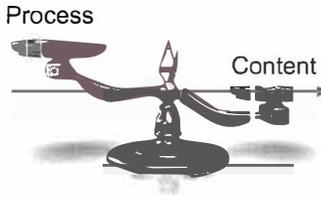
Stage	Tool	Purpose	Example of Things to Say or Do
Close	Negative Poll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To eliminate alternatives that have low priority and simplify the list of choices To reach quick agreement between a few remaining options 	<p><i>"Is there anyone <u>not</u> willing to take #5 off the list?"</i></p> <p><i>"Is anyone <u>opposed</u> to focusing on category #3 to start?"</i></p>
	Build Up/Eliminate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To get the best of different options To facilitate negotiation between two parties 	<p><i>"Are there any proposals on how we can make D & G clear and concise?"</i></p> <p><i>"What could we add to option A to make it work for you?"</i></p> <p><i>"Does the entire group agree with the change?"</i></p>
	Both/And	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid either/or decisions or win/lose solutions 	<p><i>"Do you need to choose between these final decisions? Could you try both?"</i></p>

Tools for Reaching Agreement

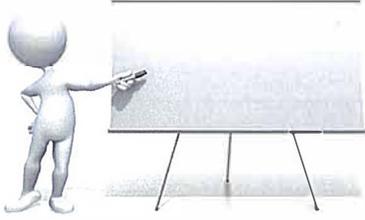
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Who Facilitates Agreement?



When more than 20% of the leader's attention is focused on the content, it's time for the leader to ask other members of the team to help keep the process focused and on track (or to call in a neutral facilitator).

OPTIONS	WHEN TO USE
<p>The Leader (accountable for the results)</p> 	<p>Most informational meetings (staff meetings, project updates) where the primary purpose is to exchange information and update team members</p> <p>Other types of meetings (planning or problem-solving) where the leader is not the primary source of expertise and is not vested in arriving at a particular outcome or decision</p>
<p>Team Members (assist in part or lead whole meeting)</p> 	<p>Meetings where the leader has a strong vested interest in the outcome and wants to focus on the content, and another team member has the necessary facilitation skills</p> <p>Meetings where the leader may have to respond to many questions and/or many issues could be raised, preventing him or her from being able to focus on both content and process</p>
<p>Neutral Facilitator (not accountable for the results)</p> 	<p>Meetings where all members of the team, including the leader, want to focus mostly on the content and/or have a high stake in the outcome</p>

Strategic Moments

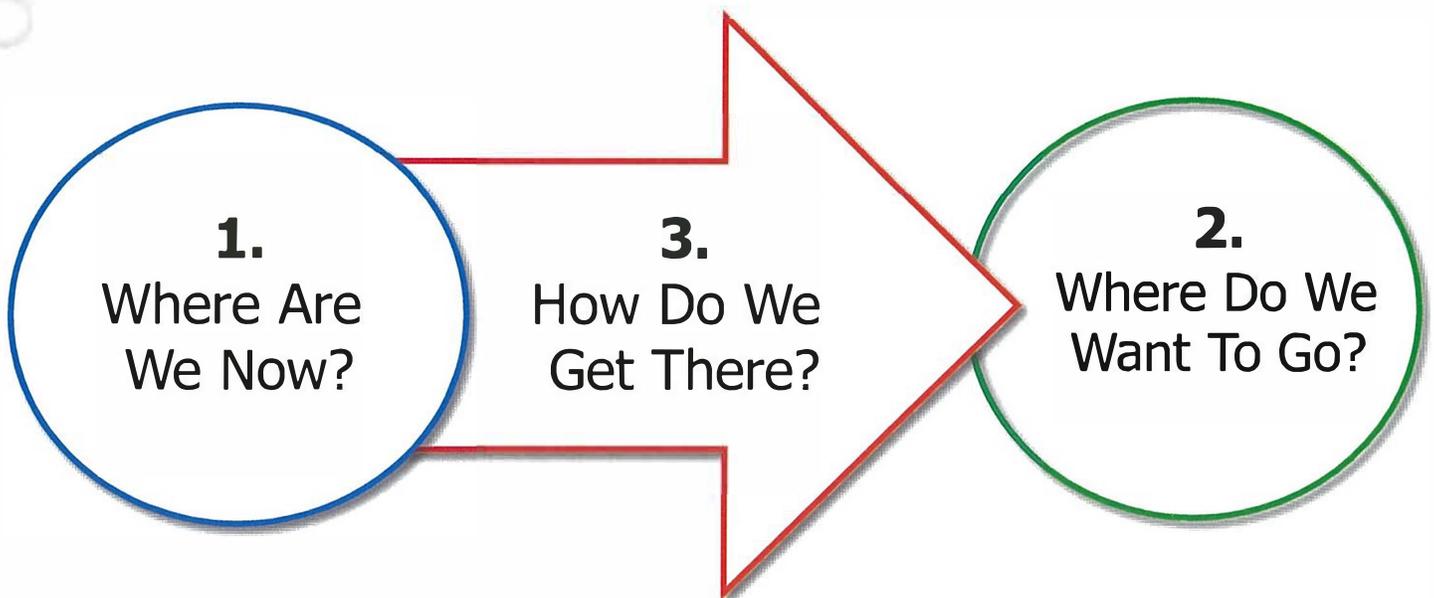
Strategic moments are those points in a discussion or team process when people are faced with a choice about what to do next and how to do it. The leader's job is to help navigate the group through these moments.



Examples of Strategic Moments

- The group is struck and cannot decide how to move forward.
- People are talking about different subjects or using different processes.
- The group has reached a key agreement and is ready to move on to something else.

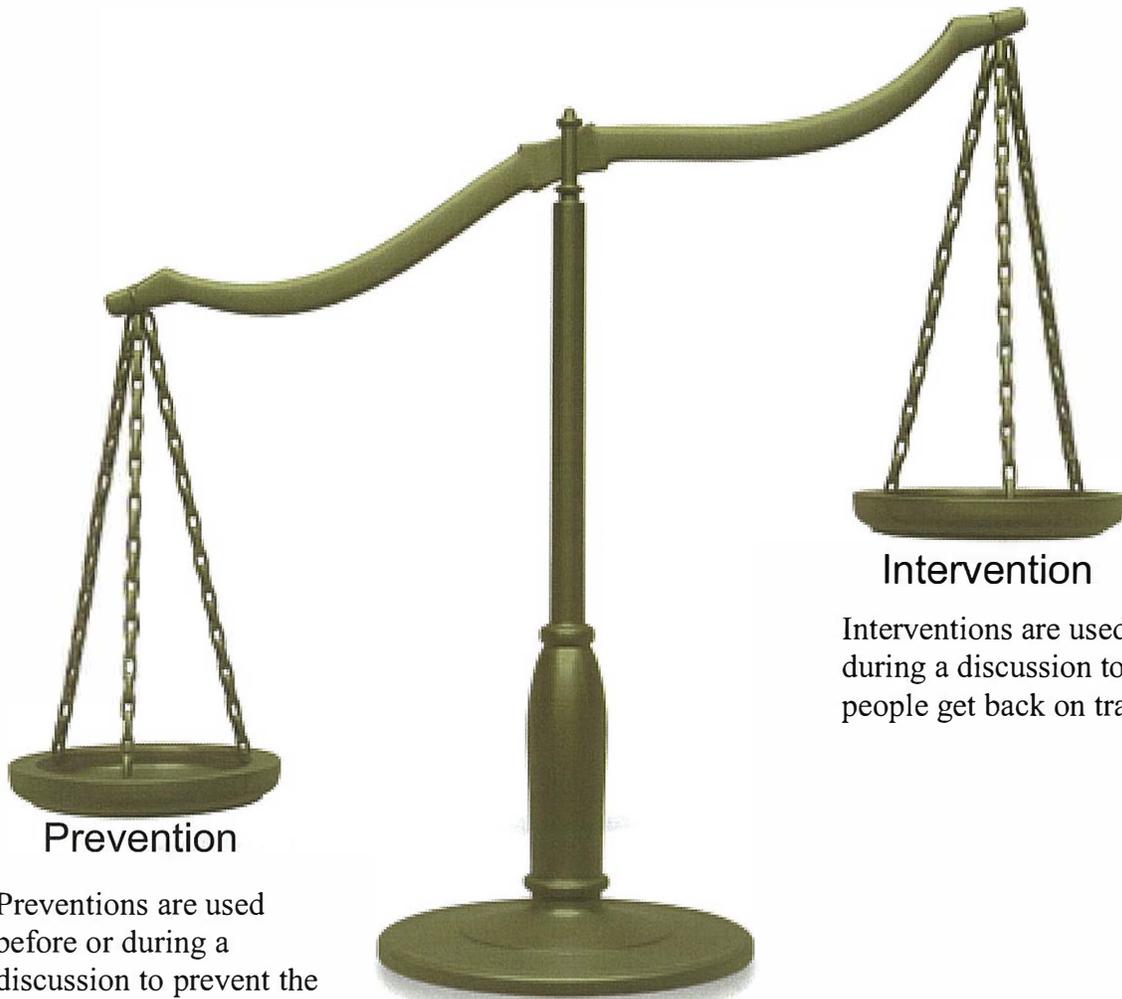
The Questions of a Strategic Moment



It's not knowing what to do that counts. It's knowing what to do when you don't know what to do.

Preventions and Interventions

Preventions and interventions can be used by a leader to create a safe environment for collaboration



Prevention

Preventions are used before or during a discussion to prevent the discussion from getting off track.

Intervention

Interventions are used during a discussion to help people get back on track.

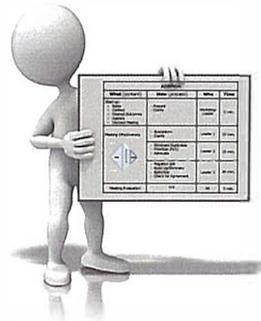
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of intervention.

Preventions

At the beginning of a meeting or discussion...

GET AGREEMENT ON:

- Desired Outcomes
- Agenda
- Roles
- Decision Making
- Ground Rules



Review and check for agreement on how the group will work together.

“Before we get into our meeting today, I’d like to make sure we all agree on our desired outcomes and our agenda.”

During a meeting or discussion...

CLARIFY THE PROCESS

- Make sure the group is clear about, and agrees to, the process being suggested.

“Before we start brainstorming, let me review the process. Now, can we agree to brainstorm for the next 10 minutes?”



FOCUS ON AGREEMENTS, NOT DISAGREEMENTS

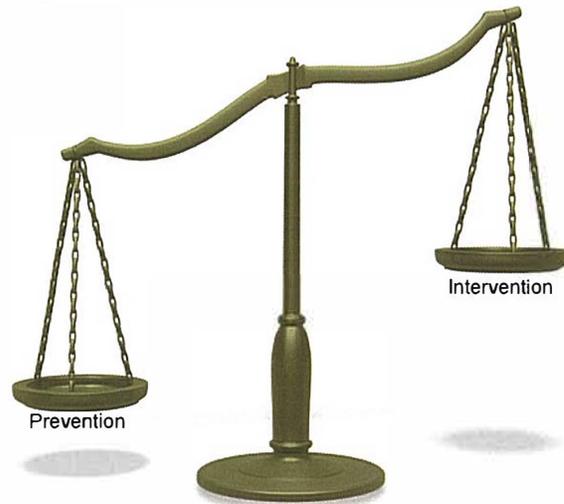
- Build a safe environment and avoid counter-productive debate by focusing on agreement rather than disagreement. Highlighting agreement reinforces what the group has in common and prevents the group from sliding back into issues they have already resolved.

“Great, we all agreed on the problem statement. Now let’s begin generating solutions.”

“We already agreed to three important points: (1) when we’re holding the next school assembly, (2) how much money we will spend, and (3) who will give the keynote address. Okay, let’s focus now on other activities for the assembly.”

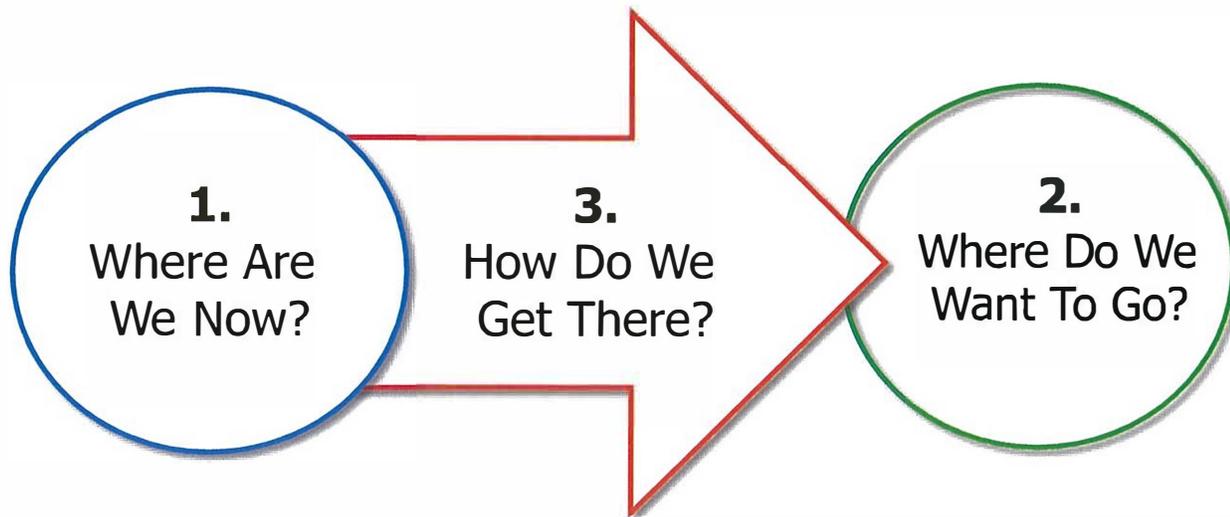
Interventions

Interventions are facilitative behaviors used during a discussion to help people get back on track.



Interventions are often useful at a strategic moment when people are confused, spinning their wheels, or participating in counter-productive debate.

The Questions of a Strategic Moment



Interventions (continued)

Boomerang



Return a question to the person who asked it or to the team so that the facilitative leader does not take responsibility for answering all questions.

Ask/Say “What’s Going On?”



Name something that is not working, i.e., get it out in the open so the group can deal with it.

Enforce Process Agreements

Remind the team of a previous process agreement.



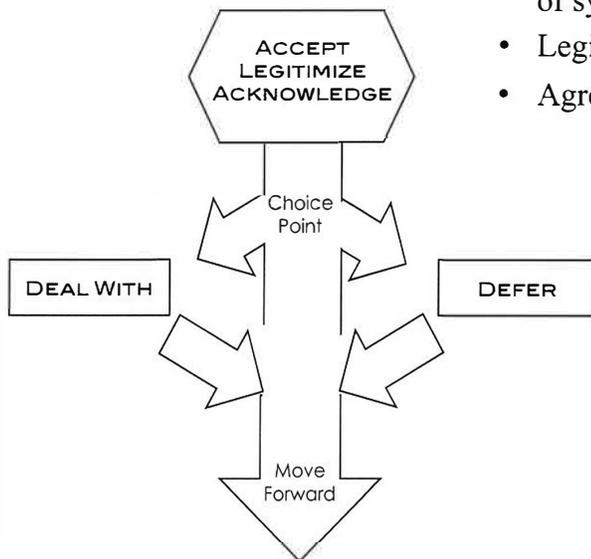
Regain Focus



Make sure everyone is working on the same content and using the same process at the same time.

Interventions (continued)

Accept/Legitimize/ Deal With or Defer



Create a safe environment for participants by:

- Responding neutrally to a speaker whose ideas are “out of synch” with others in the group.
- Legitimizing his or her contribution.
- Agreeing together about how to move forward.

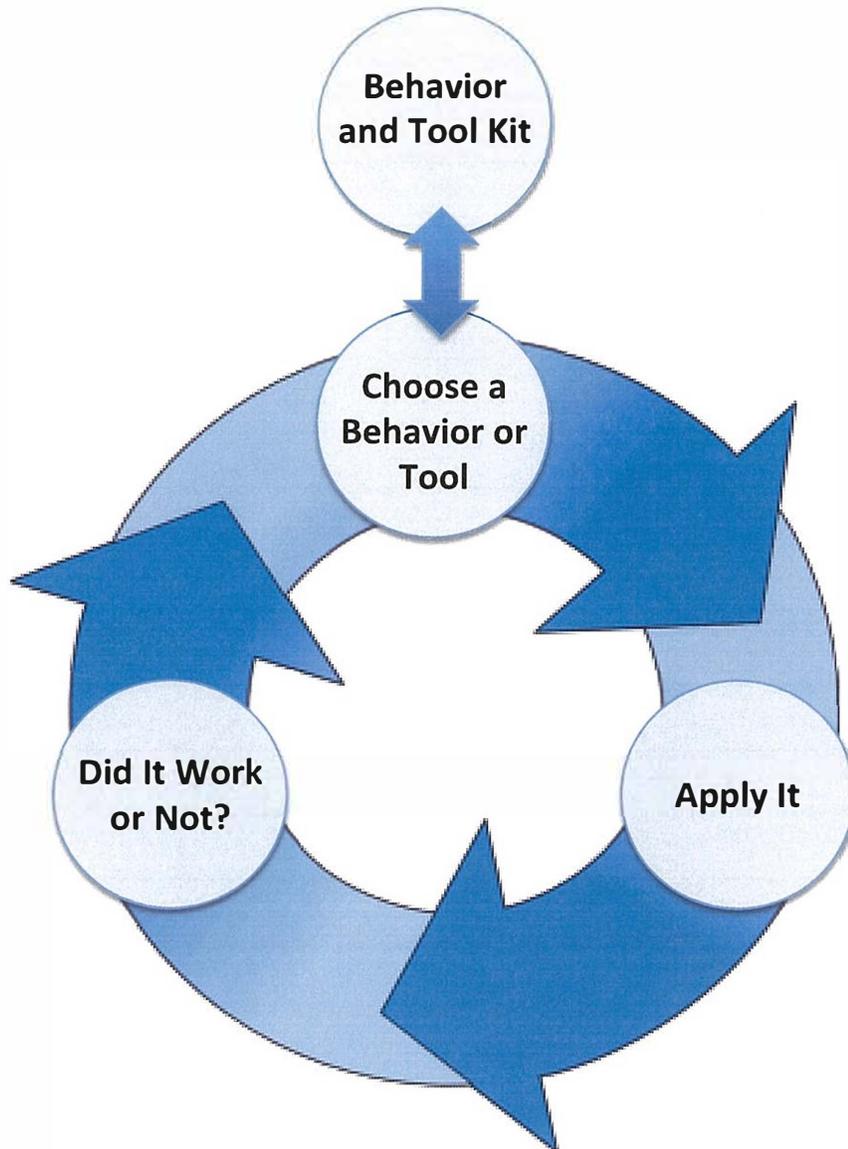
Use Humor



Make a joke to relieve the tension. Be careful not to joke at someone else's expense.

Facilitating Agreement: A Heuristic Process

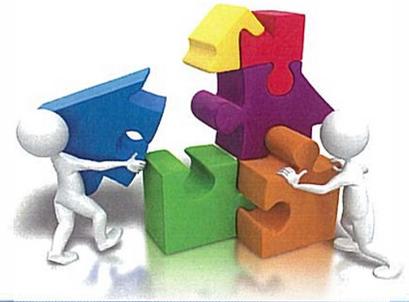
There is no one right way to solve a problem, create a vision or build a plan of action.



“Heuristic” means to discover or to invent. A heuristic process is the creative, flexible, non-linear approach we use to solve problems or create plans.

Facilitate Agreement

Connect, Reflect and Summarize



<p>Three Stages of a Discussion</p>	