



## Facilitation Strategies for Fostering Discussion and Consensus

OPRE report #2022-194

A high-quality continuous quality improvement (CQI) process needs curiosity and consensus building to identify and prioritize critical questions and solutions. At its best, CQI includes a variety of perspectives and experiences. But how do we make sure all voices are heard and everyone agrees on the way ahead? The following facilitation strategies<sup>1</sup> are examples of equitable processes to incorporate diverse perspectives, guide question development, and gain consensus and buy-in on prioritized areas for CQI.

FACILITATION STRATEGY	KEY POINTS	CONSIDERATIONS
<p><b>CONVERSATION CAFÉ<sup>2</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State the theme of the conversation, usually in the form of a question. For example, “What are we curious about related to our program implementation? What would we like to learn more about from data?” (These become your “guiding questions.”)</li> <li>• Explain there will be four rounds of conversation at every table: two rounds using the guided questions, a third round as open conversation, and a final round with the guiding questions.</li> <li>• Distribute talking objects (e.g., talking stick, pen, etc.)</li> <li>• Read the six Conversation Café agreements. See link provided.</li> <li>• Establish a volunteer host at each table. The host is a full participant whose role is to gently intervene only when a participant visibly fails to observe one of the six agreements, most frequently talking more than their share.</li> <li>• First round with the guiding questions (1 minute per person): each person shares what he or she is thinking, feeling, or doing about the theme or topic.</li> <li>• Second round with the guiding questions (1 minute per person): each person shares their thoughts and feelings after having listened to everybody at the table.</li> <li>• Third round (20 to 40 minutes): open conversation (option to use guiding questions).</li> <li>• Fourth round with the guiding questions (5 to 10 minutes): each member shares “takeaways.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helpful in facilitating listening</li> <li>• Helpful in sharing ideas in a safe space</li> <li>• Everyone is included; everyone can participate</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Liberating Structures. Retrieved at: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/>

<sup>2</sup>Conversation Café: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/17-conversation-cafe/>

FACILITATION STRATEGY	KEY POINTS	CONSIDERATIONS
<p><b><u>SHIFT AND SHARE</u></b><sup>3</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the process to the group: explain that there are three to seven innovation stations and small groups will move from station to station for a 10-minute presentation and brief questions and feedback period. <b>Presenters of the innovation stations will share what they think are the most pressing questions for your program to answer through data.</b> (5 minutes)</li> <li>• Presenters can be selected in advance or volunteer in the moment, but should be knowledgeable about the subject (such as CQI or program services). Form the same number of small groups as there are presenters, with no more than seven.</li> <li>• Each small group goes to a different station, where presenters conduct their sessions (repeated up to seven times). (10 minutes per station/session)</li> <li>• Participants ask questions or provide feedback on strategies to gather and use the data. (2 minutes per station/session)</li> <li>• Small groups move to the next station. (1 minute per move)</li> <li>• Repeat until groups have visited all stations.</li> <li>• Total time for visiting six stations is approximately 90 minutes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helpful for deepening conversations related to data</li> <li>• Can select presenters ahead of time to help facilitate conversation</li> <li>• Facilitates movement and dialogue in the group</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>1-2-4-ALL</u></b><sup>4</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First stage:</b> Silent self-reflection by individuals on questions they are most interested in discussing or answering with the data. Write them down. (1 minute)</li> <li>• <b>Second Stage:</b> Share questions in pairs, building on ideas from self-reflection to generate additional questions. (2 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>Third Stage:</b> Share and develop questions from your pair in foursomes (notice similarities and differences). (4 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>Fourth Stage:</b> As a group, ask, “What is one question or idea that stood out in your conversation?” Each group shares one important question or idea with all (repeat cycle as needed). (5 minutes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great for groups of various sizes</li> <li>• Can modify easily; for example, can move from 1-2-All if a smaller group</li> </ul>

This resource was written by Sarah Avellar (Mathematica) and Liz Pollock (Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE)) based on materials from the University of North Carolina’s Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute - National Implementation Research Network in collaboration with the Administration for Children and Families’ Office of Family Assistance (OFA) and OPRE (contract #HHSP2332009564WC/HHSP23337050T). OPRE Project Officers: Katie Pahigiannis and Pooja Gupta Curtin. Mathematica Project Director: Sarah Avellar.

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<sup>3</sup>Shift and Share: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/11-shift-share/>

<sup>4</sup>1-2-4-All: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all/>