



# PEER GROUP CONSULTING INSTRUCTIONS

## Overview

Peer consulting is a method that builds on Heifetz and Linsky's model of Adaptive Leadership by having peers operate as consultants to each other's adaptive leadership challenges.

Each person has a turn at being the 'client' and bringing an Adaptive Leadership Challenge for their peers to consult on. Whilst the 'client' benefits from exploring his or her Adaptive Leadership Challenge, consultants also build on their advocacy and inquiry skills.

*The focus is on exploring the problems through multiple perspectives rather than come to one definitive solution.* (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002)

## Process

1. You will complete peer consulting rounds that focus on your Adaptive Leadership Challenge. Each round will have one participant be the 'client', whilst the rest of the group will act as peer consultants.
2. Appoint one consultant as a facilitator, whose main role is to act as time keeper
3. You will have:
  - 5 minutes for the client to tell the story of his/her Leadership Challenge.
  - 5 minutes for the peer consultants to ask factual questions to clarify the challenge.
  - 10 minutes for peer consultants to brainstorm diagnosis (the client turns away from the group but remains within earshot and simply listens). The consulting group explores as many possible contributing factors to the challenge, focusing both on the systemic forces in the challenge and what part the client may actually be playing.
  - 5 minutes for peer consultants to brainstorm possible action steps. These are not necessarily to "solve" the Challenge, but to either build more data or make progress on the Challenge (the client doesn't engage in the discussion).
  - 2 minutes for the client to reflect aloud on what he/she heard and for peer consultants to reflect aloud about what the client appears to have actually heard (or not).

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE	TIPS
<p><b>Client presents</b></p> <p>5 minutes</p>	<p>For Client to present their Adaptive Challenge</p>	<p>What is the Adaptive Challenge?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the major players? What are their conflicting perspectives and interests?</li> <li>What action you have taken or are thinking about taking?</li> <li>What are your real stakes and interests?</li> <li>Are there any hidden issues?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consultants ask questions</b></p> <p>5 minutes</p>	<p>For Consultants to understand the Adaptive Challenge and the complexities surrounding it and to gather information to help you conduct Diagnostic Brainstorming in the next phase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the major players? What are their formal relationships? Informal alliances?</li> <li>Where is the senior authority on the issue?</li> <li>What has the Client done so far to work the problem?</li> <li>What has the Client decided not to do?</li> <li>What would success look like to the Client?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Diagnostic – Brainstorm</b></p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>For Consultants to interpret what is happening, offer alternative interpretations, and illuminate new ways to understand the Client’s Adaptive Challenge.</p>	<p>“I wonder if ...”</p> <p>“I hypothesise ...”</p> <p><b>Questions for Consultants to Consider as Part of their Diagnosis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the Client’s stakes? What challenges face the Client related to loss, competence, and loyalty?</li> <li>What issues or values does the Client represent to in the case?</li> <li>What are the underlying or hidden issues? What are the value choices each has to make?</li> <li>How does the situation look to the other players? What is the story they are telling themselves?</li> <li>What options are off the table for the Client and why?</li> <li>What has the Client contributed to the problem? What is her/his piece of the mess?</li> <li>What possible interpretations has the Client been understandably unwilling to consider?</li> <li>What would success look like to the players other than the Client?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Possible action steps – Brainstorm</b></p> <p>5 minutes</p>	<p>For Consultants to offer possible new initiatives, smart risks, and experiments for the Client to try to move the challenge forward.</p>	<p>“What if ...”</p> <p>“I suggest / recommend ...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What possible initiatives could be undertaken?</li> <li>What are low risk tests of some of the ideas discussed?</li> <li>What courageous conversations need to take place?</li> <li>What new partnerships or relationship shifts need to happen?</li> <li>What are specific and possible goals over the next month to achieve?</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Client reflections</b></p> <p>2 minutes</p>	<p>For the Client not to resolve the case! This time is intended for the Client to share initial reactions to the process and ask specific questions that he/she is now pondering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment on what has been heard. The idea is that the Client will “rent” the ideas, trying them out, rather than “buying” them or defending against them.</li> <li>• Identify any action step(s) you may undertake in the next month.</li> </ul>