Community Conversations That Matter

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Welcome!

Introductions – in pairs

WHAT
WORKS
SCOTLAND

Overview

- Intro
- Policy context and local democracy in Scotland
- Inclusion & diversity
- Conflict & collaboration
  - Game of Chairs
- Break (11.30am)
- Facilitating dialogue and deliberation
  - Reframing
  - Thinking hats
- Impact: pointers for reflection
- Check out

Why community participation?

(Involve 2005)

- Addressing **complex problems** drawing on untapped knowledge, experience and perspectives

- Making **better policies** and ensuring effective implementation

- Improving public **service design and delivery**

- Building **legitimacy and trust** in public institutions

- Developing **citizens' skills, confidence and ambition**

- Enabling more **active citizens and communities**

Policy context for community participation in local democracy

- Local Government reform (forthcoming, possibly a 'decentralisation' or 'democratic renewal' bill)

- Relaunch of the National Standards for Community Engagement (2016)

- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

- Participatory Budgeting national programme (2014-2017)

- COSLA Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy (2014)

- Parliamentary Local Government Committee (2013, 2014)

- National Planning Framework 3

- Christie Commission on Future Delivery of Public Services 2011

- Audits of Community Planning Partnerships (2011, 2013), Review of Community Planning (2012, 2016)

- Community Councils Short Life Working Group (2011)

local democracy in Scotland

A 'silent crisis' of local democracy? (Bort et al 2012)

- Scotland has "the largest average population per basic unit of local government of any developed country"(Keating 2005)

- Average population **size of municipality**:
  - Finland=15,960; France= 1770; Germany= 7,080; Spain= 5.680; EU average= 5,630
  - Scotland= 163,200

- Alongside England, Scotland has some of the **lowest voter turnout** at local elections in the EU

- Ratio Elected Councillors / Citizens represented:
  - Finland= 1/500; France 1/125; Germany:1/400; Spain 1/700; UK= 1/2860
  - Scotland = 1/4270

Participation in local decision-making in Scotland

- only **35% of Scottish citizens feel** part of how decisions affecting their community are made
- **77% would get more involved** in their community if it was easier to participate in decisions that affect it
- and **82% would like more say** in how local services are provided in their area.

Source: Ipsos MORI 2014

Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy 2014:

- "50 years of **centralisation** has not tackled the biggest problems that Scotland faces
- For a country with Scotland's wealth and strength, the level of **inequality** is intolerable, and has huge social and financial costs
- There is a link between the **absence of strong local democracy** and the prevalence of inequalities
- It is **communities** that **empower governments** at all levels, not governments that empower people"

http://participedia.net

IAP2 Spectrum
of Public Participation

International Association
for Public Participation

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Sharing examples

Key challenges in organising public participation processes

Impact: clear link to decision making

Inclusion and diversity

Quality of dialogue and deliberation

Why these three dimensions?

- **Inclusion & diversity:**
  - legitimacy
  - experience & expertise, effectiveness;
- **Dialogue & deliberation:**
  - quality of face-to-face communication
  - informed + considered judgement
- **Impact:**
  - making participation **meaningful and consequential**
  - developing social capital: trust & capacity

Inclusion & Diversity

Inclusion / exclusion

- **External** (ie access to the process)
- **Internal** (ie access/influence within the process)

Diversity

- **Demographic** (e.g. gender, income, age...)
- **Discursive** (e.g. perspectives, views))
- **Epistemic** (e.g. knowledge, expertise)

"unless practitioners take corrective measures of some kind,

participation of all varieties will be skewed in favour of those with higher socioeconomic status and formal education"

Ryfe & Stalsburg 2012,
in 'Democracy in motion'

Inclusion and diversity: pros and cons of **different recruitment / mobilisation strategies**

Self-selection	Random selection / by lot
Purposive sampling / targeted selection	Election

Conflict & Collaboration

Game of Chairs:
a game about conflict and collaboration

Game of Chairs: debrief

- What did you experience?

- How did you relate to those who wanted to do something else?

- If you confronted others, how did you do it?

- Did you follow instructions? Did you feel it had to be carried out whatever happened?

- What factors influenced your behaviour?

- How would you do this another time?

- Can you relate this to real life situations in your work?

'Collaborative rationality':
What makes partnerships work?

Collaboration in high performance groups
(Johnson & Johnson 1997)

In effective groups there is:

- Active participation by all members

- Clear communication of ideas and feelings

- Influence based on expertise AND experience, ability and access to information (rather than on the basis of authority or power)

- Flexible decision making procedures responsive to the needs of the situation

- Use of critical analysis of each other's reasoning

- Explicit recognition of conflicts, with efforts to resolve them constructively

Collaborative rationality

A process is collaboratively rational to the extent that

- all the affected interests jointly engage in face to face dialogue, bringing their various perspectives to the table to deliberate on the problems they face together.

- all participants are fully informed and able to express their views and be listened to, whether they are powerful or not

(Innes & Booher 2010:6)

Power dimension

Collaborative rationality requires an **equalization of power**… Skilled facilitators make sure that

- everyone is heard respectfully

- all have the same information

- all have the capacity and the support to speak freely.

Process managers / facilitators have to address external power differentials to keep the power around the table as equal as possible

(Innes & Booher 2010:111)

Key factors in successful collaboration
(Innes & Booher 2003, 2010)

- **Diversity of interests**
  - Multiple 'knowledges' and ways of seeing the world
- **Interdependence** between participants
  - a sense that I cannot do what I must do without your cooperation
- **Authentic Dialogue + Deliberation**
  - Reciprocity, relationships, learning, creativity, no force other than the force of the better argument… (Habermas 1984)

When these 3 conditions align > resilience, adaptation, shared meaning and purpose, innovative solutions
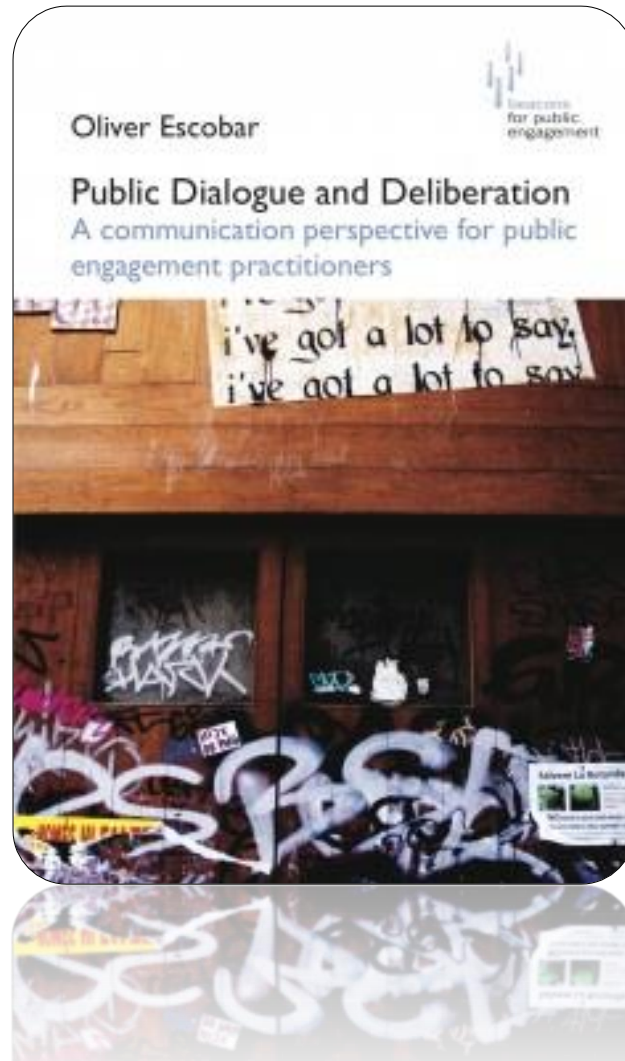
Break (20 mins)

Dialogue & Deliberation

Dialogue + Deliberation

❖ Communication theory

❖ Dialogue

❖ Deliberation

Handouts from:

https://oliversdialogue.wordpress.com/public-dialogue-and-deliberation/

Oliver Escobar

Public Dialogue and Deliberation
A communication perspective for public
engagement practitioners

i've got a lot to say;
i've got a lot to say.

Society as a web of communication patterns

Different patterns of communication create different contexts.

Communication is not only instrumental, but also consequential:

- Importance of **what gets done** (results, outputs)

- but also what gets made (relationships, contexts)

- and **how it gets made** (through what communication patterns; with what consequences)

Communication patterns:
common rituals + pitfalls

- ✧ Exchanging monologues
- ✧ Pre-packaged arguments
- ✧ Dominant voices
- ✧ Posturing
- ✧ Specialised jargon
- ✧ Avoidance
- ✧ Polarisation and oversimplifaction
- ✧ Confrontational exchanges

Factors that foster or hinder effective communication

Different standpoints

- Class, gender, ethnicity, age, income

- Backgrounds, needs, hopes and fears

- Perspectives, views, values

- Cross-cultural differences and stereotyping

- Positional power

Communication norms

- Adversarial cultures

Interpersonal factors

- Personal power

- Strong emotions

- Different thinking styles

- Egos

- Poor communication skills

Lack of information

- Can feed speculation and suspicion

- Downward spiral: anxiety, fear, hostility and conflict

Dialogue

- A form of non-polarised discourse that focuses on understanding and relationship-building

- Creation of **safe spaces**

- Suspension of assumptions and automatic response (assimilation/opposition)

- Finding common ground / exploring differences

- Co-creation of shared meanings and vocabularies

- Collaborative inquiry

- Storytelling

- Understanding the contribution of emotions

Deliberation

Information, evidence, stories

Mapping and evaluating alternatives

Giving (and taking) public reasons

Re-examining and (perhaps) changing preferences

Seeking agreement or consensus

Making informed and reasoned decisions

You know deliberation has happened when …

❖ Participants have been exposed to different perspectives

❖ There has been learning

❖ There has been an exchange of (public) reasons

❖ Participants have re-examined their preferences after hearing new evidence and arguments

❖ Participants seek (some level of) agreement or consensus

❖ Decisions/conclusions are based on informed and considered judgement

Debate	Dialogue	Deliberation
Seeks to promote opinions and gain majority support	Seeks to build understanding and relationships	Seeks common ground in order to solve problems
Participants argue, express, persuade and compete	Participants listen, exchange, reach across, reflect	Participants frame and weigh options, and make choices
Outcome: **win/lose**	Outcome: **no decision**	Outcome: **win/win**

PIN diagram (Andrew Acland)

Win-Lose

Win-Win

visibility line

Positions

Interest & values

Needs & fears
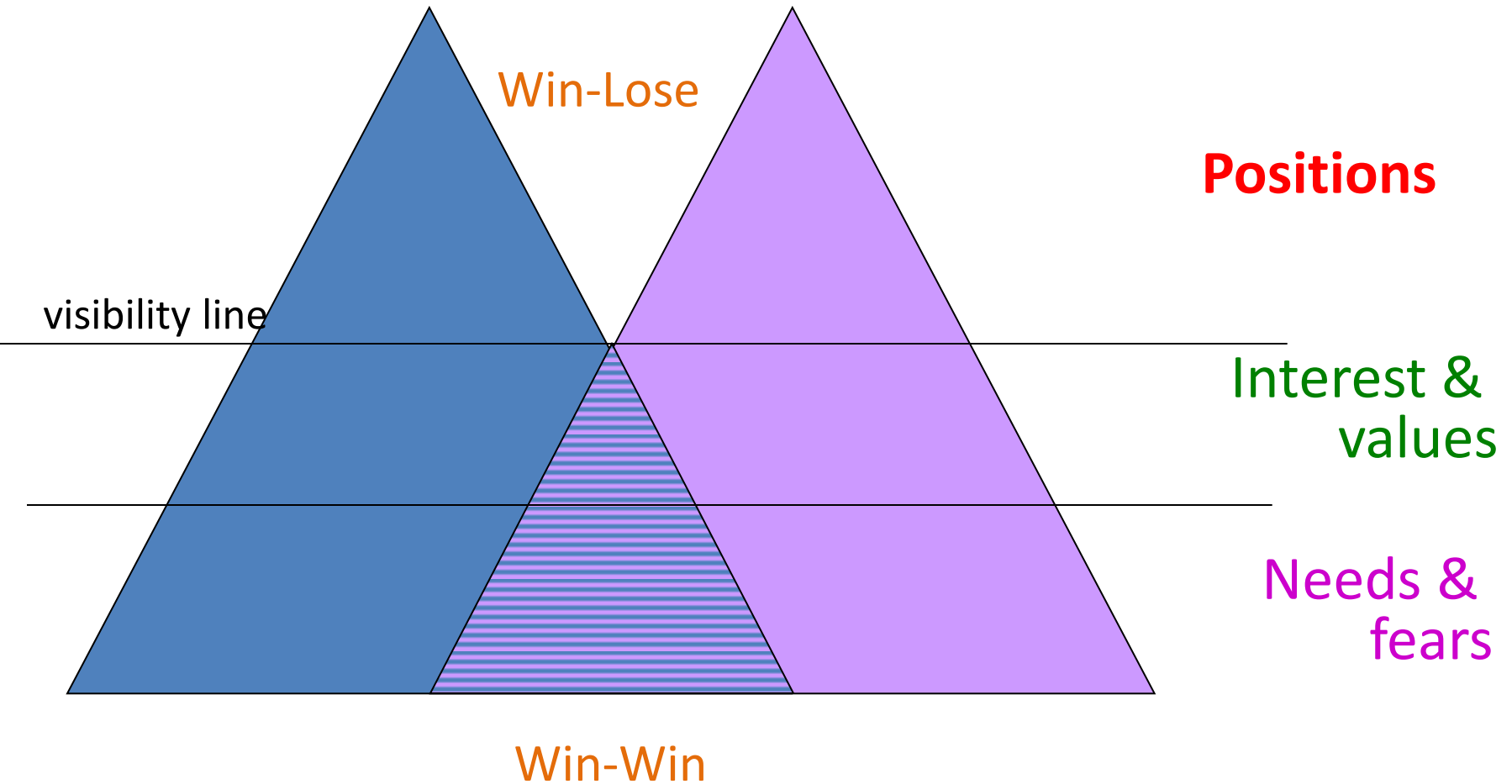
The D+D model

DIALOGUE

Inquiry dynamics

-Exploring and learning
-Co-producing shared meaning
-Building understanding and relationships

DELIBERATION

Advocacy dynamics

-Exchanging public reasons
-Weighting alternatives
-Making decisions

Six Thinking Hats®

Blue Hat
Process

White Hat
Facts

Red Hat
Feelings

Green Hat
Creativity

Yellow Hat
Benefits

Black Hat
Cautions

BROADEN YOUR THINKING
deBono
for Schools

Let's have a go!

Topic:

spending cuts on public services

Thinking hat questions

- Red hat: What do you *feel* about public spending cuts?

- Yellow hat: What are the potential *benefits* of the public spending cuts?

- **Black hat:** What are the potential ***problems*** surrounding the public spending cuts?

- Green hat: What possible/new *solutions* are there?

- Red hat: What do you *feel* about these?

- White hat: What *information* would we need in order move towards solutions?

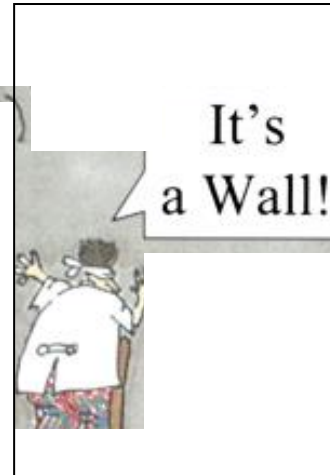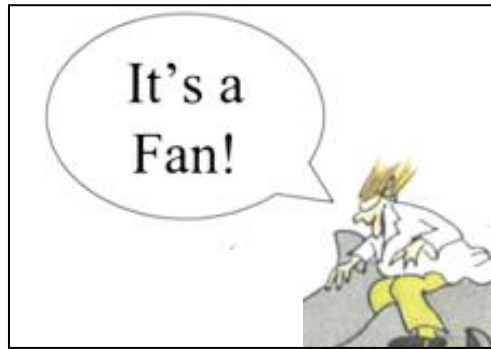- Blue hat: What *processes* would we need in order to move towards solutions?

Debrief: thinking hats as a tool to manage communication patterns

❖ How did that feel?

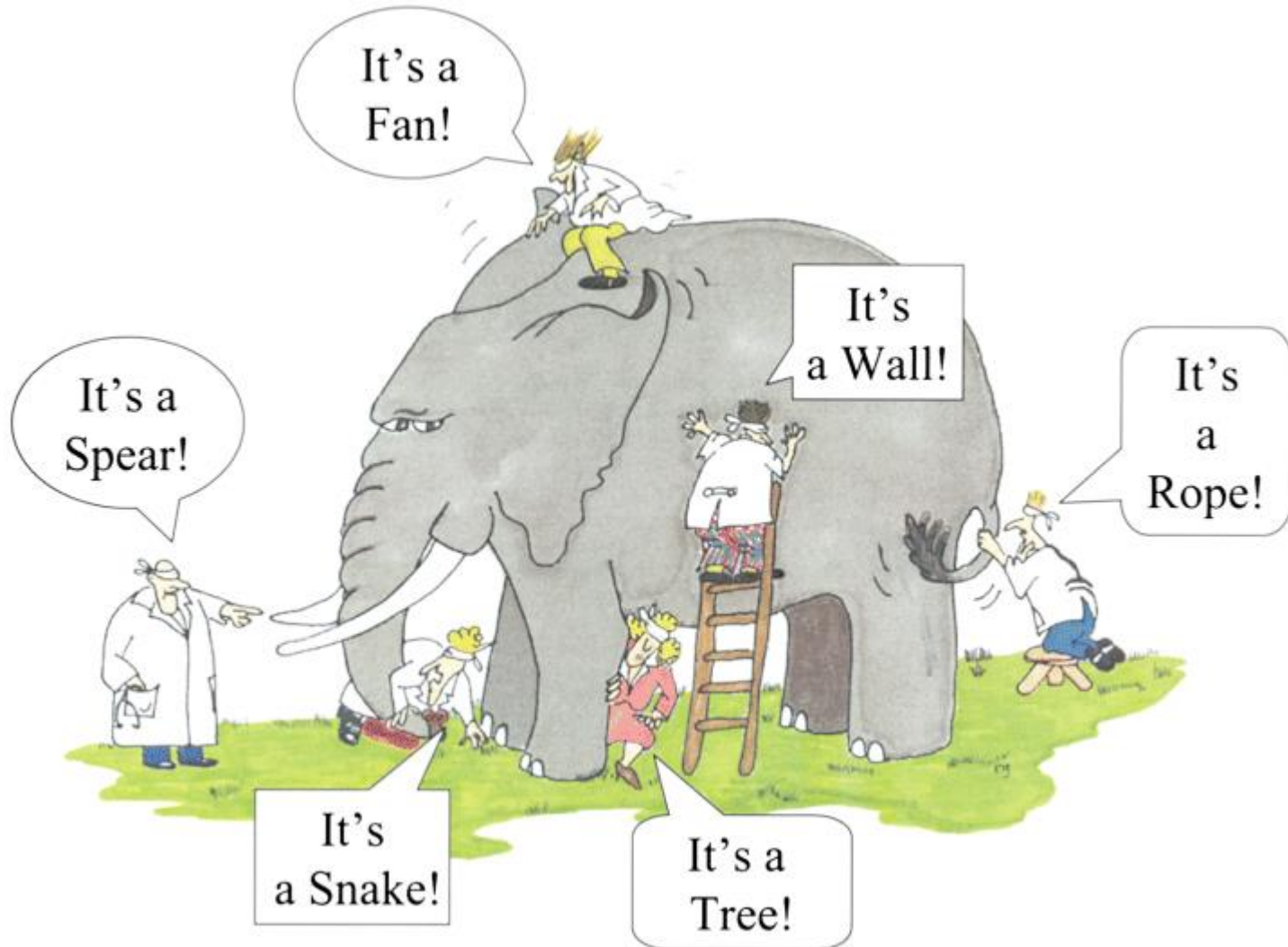❖ How might you use it to guide the design of community conversations?

Facilitation
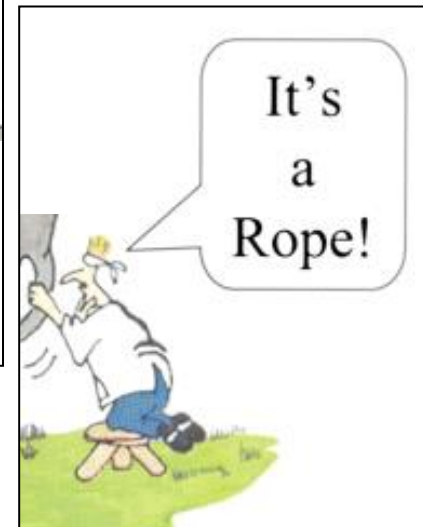
The blind experts and the elephant

Role of facilitators

1. To help the group meet its aims as fully as possible in the time available **(keeping on task)**

2. To encourage the fullest possible participation of the group **(inclusiveness)**

3. To maintain a neutral stance on the topic under discussion **(impartiality)**

Tips for facilitators

❖ **Affirm** the value of all contributions (or none!)

❖ **Encourage** everyone to speak but don't make people feel uncomfortable

❖ **Check** for clarification if people are getting confused

❖ Manage **time**-sharing

❖ Appeal to the '**ground rules or guidelines**' if anyone dominates, distracts, etc

Sample guidelines

1. One voice at a time - so we hear one another.

2. Respect different views; try to understand one another, not impose views.

3. Make points concisely - so everyone has a say

4. You can be silent, but not silenced.

Facilitation resources

❖ Tone of voice + body language

❖ Artefacts: eg, talking stick, recording materials

❖ Time out, parking place, etc

❖ Discursive tools:

    ✧ Paraphrasing + summarising

    ✧ Scoping in + out

    ✧ Making connections between points

    ✧ Framing + reframing questions

Tips for handling difficult dynamics

❖   Involve the group in managing time-sharing

❖   Be flexible, adaptive, responsive

❖   Service the needs of each individual AND the group
     (if unsure, ask them!)

❖   Welcome conflict but not confrontation

❖   Detect and alter communication patterns

Framing questions to prompt discussion

Closed questions

✧ Invite yes/no answers

✧ Avoid unless to move on or check understanding

Open questions

✧ Prefaced by 'what, when, how, why …?'

✧ Invite fuller answers

Framing questions to …

1. **Encourage or draw someone out:** *'Can you tell us a bit more about that?', 'Could you expand on that?'*

2. **Clarify or check generalisations:** *'How often does this happen?', 'Can you give an example?'*

3. **Summarise or paraphrase:** *'Are you saying…?', 'Can I check I've got this right?'*

4. **Move the discussion on or explore deeper:** *'How do you all feel about [new issue]?', 'Is there a connection between [X points made]?' or 'How might we understand [a tension or X contrasting points]?'*

Re-framing negative interventions

1. Acknowledge what has been said +/or the strength of feeling.

2. Ask an open question that:

    i.   **gets at the underlying (or bigger) issue**, and

    ii. **turns it into a positive challenge**, and

    iii. **involves the group** in addressing the challenge.

Examples of re-framing (1)

❖ Last time I went to a Community Planning meeting it was a complete waste of time!

How might we make this meeting a positive experience for everyone?

❖ This is the responsibility of the national government!

What could happen locally to help improve things here?

❖ We should go to the press about this failure!

What should we do to avoid such failures in the future?

Examples of re-framing (2)

❖ You are so negative about this proposal!

   How might we evaluate proposals?

❖ I object to landfill sites!

   How might we deal with community waste?

❖ The project officer has not been keeping us informed!

   How might we improve communication?

   …

Impact:

what does it take?

Impact: some pointers

- **Impact= democratic goods** (process) + **social goods** (outcomes)
- Closing the feedback loop: transparency on how participation has influenced (or not) decisions / services
- Action research: knowing players, dynamics, history, agendas
- Backstage political work
- Striking unlikely alliances across boundaries; enrolling political champions
- Systems thinking/institutional fit

Checking out:

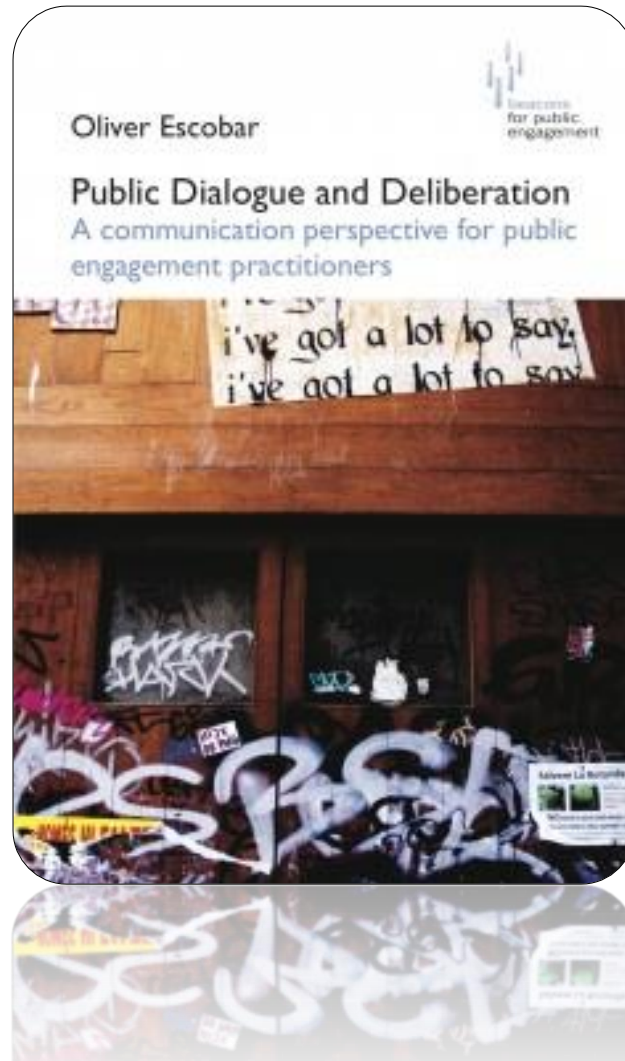your takeaway message +
skills you want to develop further

WHAT WORKS SCOTLAND

Oliver Escobar

Public Dialogue and Deliberation
A communication perspective for public engagement practitioners

thank you

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