



Quick decisions

Purpose

To practice quick decisions and experience making a group decision under pressure. To encourage the groups to learn more about themselves and work more effectively. It's a good way of identifying roles and practising consensus.

Preparation

Devise 3-4 scenarios that would be relevant to the group.

Prepare a flipsheet with the consensus flowchart

Time

30 minutes

Materials

Consensus handout

Related tools

Making a group decision
Consensus handout

Description

Ask if anyone has been in a situation with an action group when you had to make a quick decision (have a story ready yourself). Invite a brief sharing to provide an illustration, eg we noticed a door open to the office we were intending to blockade: should we go in or stick to our original plan?

Introduce the activity by explaining that, however well-planned an action might be, there can be unforeseen situations that the group needs to make quick decisions about - maybe to take advantage of an unexpected opportunity, or deal with a sudden threat.

Say that we're now going to practice these kinds of quick decisions to learn how it works in a group. Invite people to make small groups of 4 or 5 and have them sit in separate spaces in the room. Explain that you will read out a scenario that each group will have to make a decision about ... *in one minute*.

Check that everyone understands and each group is ready.





With timer in hand, read a scenario (use 2-3 of these, or make up your own):

- One member of your group is clearly unwell and struggling to do the action, but is determined to continue. It's holding the group back.
- Your group is doing a public action and the police have just given you one minute to leave or you'll be arrested. What do you do?
- The weather has worsened and none of you has the right clothing.
- You are participating in an action where everyone agrees that there will be no property damage. You notice another group preparing to spray-paint on the building. They don't know it, but you see a TV crew setting up to film them.
- On a blockade, you are moved off the road by the police and threatened with arrest. You notice that you could sneak back onto the road.
- The action is turning nasty, with some outbreaks of violence near to your group. This is not what you expected.
- Public transport is disrupted and you're unlikely to make it home today.

Note: remember, whether or not they came to a decision, and what that decision was, is not the focus. You're looking for how the group worked together.

Debrief

After each scenario, debrief each group in turn, making it clear you are less interested in what the decision was than how the group arrived at it.

- Did you come to a decision? What was it?
- How did you reach the decision/ why were you unable to reach a decision?
- What happened in the process? How did you start? Did you all feel included?

After two or three scenarios, bring the whole group together to debrief.

Try to reflect back group roles. Who took the role of facilitator (if any), who made the first suggestion, who built on that idea/ countered it with another/ expressed doubts. Who was silent? Ask how they feel, what have they learned from this activity?

Optional: talk through the consensus process with the flipsheet. Share round the Consensus handouts.

