

What it is

A process for enabling divisive issues to be aired and resolved

What it can do

This tool can assist you to:

- Support group members in taking responsibility for the group as a whole while also advocating for interests of other sub-groups they may represent.
- Create alignment in groups/teams around potentially divisive issues.
- Help groups/teams activate their collective intelligence to generate creative solutions.

When to use it

In any group where individuals are wearing “two hats” – two roles where they are charged with representing two sets of interests that may compete or conflict.

For example:

- To create alignment in a management team responsible for the whole organization where members also represent the interests of their departments
- To create alignment in the coordinating committee of an alliance or coalition where members are responsible for the well-being of the whole while also having to advocate for the interests of their own organizations

How it works

Step 1 Create Context.

- Validate that everyone is here in two roles, or wearing two hats:
 - To represent and advocate for whatever sub-group they may represent (e.g., their department, organization, local division, interest group, social identity group, community, etc.).
 - To be responsible for the well-being of the whole: the team, organization, coalition, alliance, etc.

Step 2 Round One: Each member of the group speaks in turn (3-5 minutes each).

- In this round, ask people to wear the “hat” of their own point of view, fully representing the interests of whatever group they represent.

- Invite people to be as transparent and honest as possible about the needs and intentions of the group they represent, as well as their personal points of view.
 - What does my group need?
 - Why is this important to us – our interests as well as our positions?
- Should be timed to ensure maintaining the group's attention.

Step 3 Round Two: Members “switch hats” (3-5 minutes each).

- Ask everyone to physically stand if they are able, or otherwise take an active and engaged posture (even if they are attending via conference call).
- The instructions for the next round should be given while people are standing or in an active posture.
- When people sit they will have switched hats, and are free to speak again according to the following guidelines:
 - You now wear the hat of being responsible for the well-being of the whole.
 - Having heard all these points of view:
 - What advice would you give?
 - What would you recommend?
 - Given what's here, what creative ideas do you have that would be of maximum benefit to the group's larger, collective goals?
 - Most important: people may only speak wearing this hat and from the perspective of responsibility for the whole.
 - Half-baked, or even ¼-baked ideas are encouraged. This is a creative brainstorm.
 - Only ideas for moving the action forward will be spoken in this round.
 - People can build on the ideas of others, but no criticism should be offered in this round.
 - We won't go “around the circle” – people should speak if/when they feel moved.
 - No one should speak twice until everyone who wishes to speak has done so.
 - Offerings should be short (no more than about two minutes).

NOTE: Time the speakers and capture all ideas.

Step 4 Facilitate large group review and discussion of the list of generated ideas and proposals.

- Looking at the interests of the various groups and the needs of the whole, what recommendations and actions will be taken?