

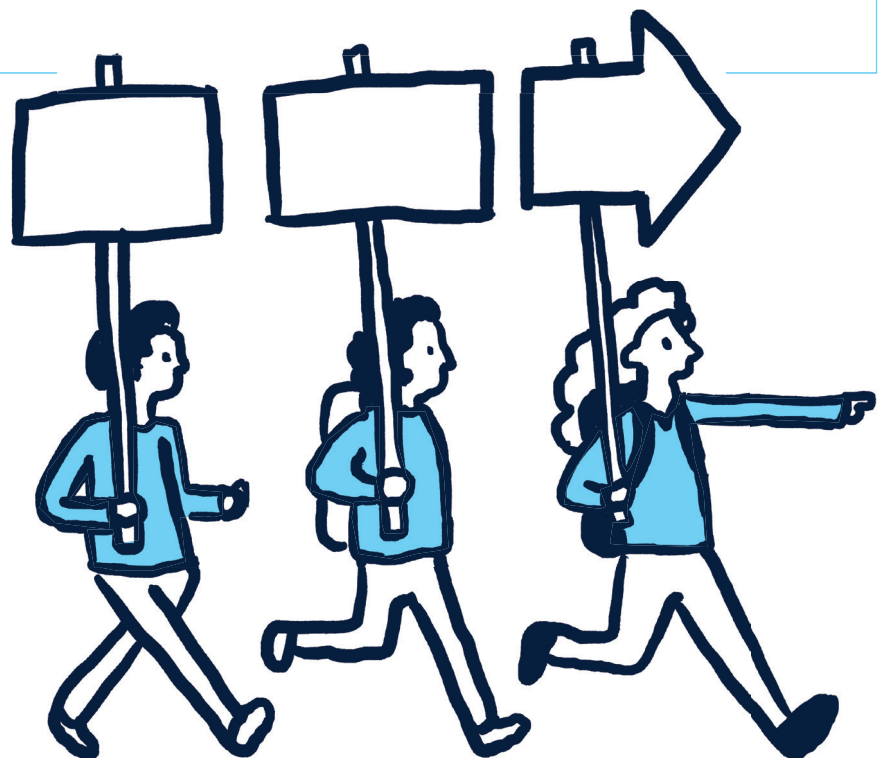
Structuring group conversation

This resource has been created to give key pointers to consider when organising group gatherings or meetings. It is designed to work alongside the other tools to allow groups to get as much from the experience as possible.

Encouraging participation

Here are some Top Tips for encouraging participation:

- When using tools like Zoom, silences seem longer, be sure to reassure people they can speak out.
- Also when using Zoom, remind people that they can share their thoughts in the chat box, if they're more comfortable with that.
- Make sure people don't feel rushed, allow time for people to get the courage to voice their opinions.
- Give people clear instructions how they can be heard. Do you go in a circle or maybe people raise their hands when wanting to speak?
- Remember to also assign a note taker so all learning and voices can be shared.
- Always sense-check your plan with another person to ensure nothing has been missed and someone outside of the design process follows your plan.



Group structures

By asking people to carry out activities together or asking them to talk in groups, you inadvertently create 'group dynamics'. These dynamics will affect the learning you gain from get-togethers, so it's important to think these through before you begin.

Multi-stakeholder meetings - Does your meeting include people with a range of previous experience and individual purpose? If so, there are some really important factors to think about before you begin.

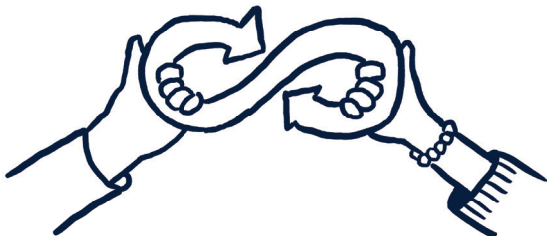
Group structure types



Shared interest or experience

Forming groups which are focused around particular topics or questions.

This structure allows for participants to focus on their specific interests or skills and can enable them to have deep discussion together.



Mixing things up

Forming groups which include a mixture of different experiences and learning.

This structure is an excellent way of providing the opportunity to investigate questions which require many approaches, angles, voices, and considerations to unravel the complexity behind them.



Moving freely

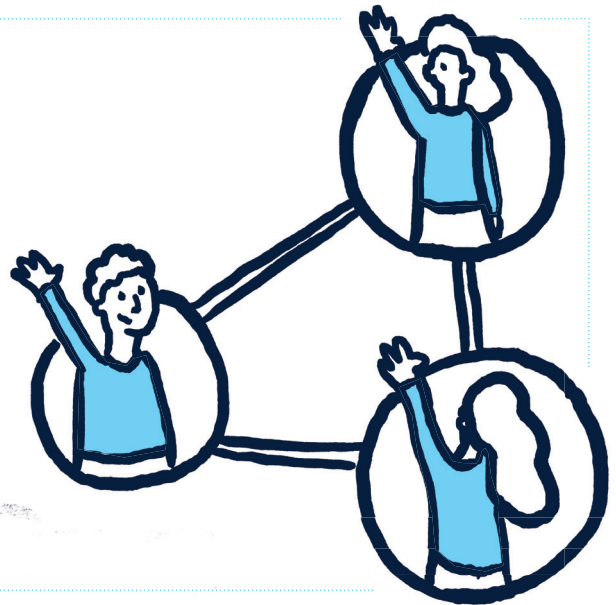
Allowing people to move freely and choose the group they join.

This structure enables more natural conversations to arise and creates 'cross pollination' of the various experience and knowledge within the room.

There is no overarching right answer for the best way to structure a group. However, you can refer back to the outcome you wish to achieve to guide you on how best to set things up.

Something to remember...

Those who have no previous knowledge of a service, project or issue have no set opinion. This means that they're able to bring new angles of perspective when trying to find solutions. It's important to always have one expert voice to guide conversation, but in general, a fresh perspective comes from those that are newer to the conversation.



Group size

The size of a group has a direct impact on its dynamics.

You can choose how you'll organise your group depending on how many people are joining you and according to their need.

Use your intuition and your understanding of the people who'll be attending and the dynamics already in place to make your decisions. You can always create a mix of large and small groups throughout your meeting to make sure you cater to everyone, but it's important to think this through before planning.

A groups size can change how:

- Long it takes for the conversations to unfold
- It feels to be a part of the conversation
- Comfortable people are sharing their opinions

The positives and the negatives:

Larger groups: Having a larger group takes longer to hear each person's view. This can be a real benefit as it allows time for participants to really think through what they're about to say. It may also give those who aren't sure how they feel time to hear others and reflect on their responses.

Smaller groups: Breaking groups down into fewer people can mean that more people can talk at once. It also saves time. In this scenario conversation proceeds more quickly, however all people will not gain the opportunity to hear each other's sharing.

Making everyone comfortable:

- There are pros and cons to how comfortable people will feel depending on their group size. Sitting in a large circle can feel exposing for some people, yet can make others feel safer.
- Sitting in smaller circles can feel more intimate and inclusive for some people, yet more daunting and intimidating for others.





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