

About this Tool

This tool will help you to:

- Critically examine the dynamics relating to an important issue in your initiative.
- Think differently about the challenge/initiative and your role in it (including strengths, weaknesses, blind spots and hidden potential).
- Identify new means of and opportunities to exercise leadership.

Context

This Tool can be used in these phases of the Collaborative Change Cycle:

- ✓ The Readiness Runway
- ✓ Building the Foundations for Change
- ✓ Creating a Shared Vision for Change
- ✓ Scaling Up for Systems Change
- ✓ Achieving Transformation

And is relevant to building these enabling capabilities:

- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Community
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Measurement

How to Hold a Case Consultation to Make Progress

We want new ways of understanding the challenge and our role in it.

Effort Level

Moderate Effort – 1 or More Hours Required

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How to use this tool

The Case Consultation Protocol provides a very structured way of discussing a challenge or initiative. It is intended to give you a different experience of talking with a group about a challenge. The instructions (roles, process) are outlined in detail below. It is important to note that the process works best with a small group (around 6 people), and when all the steps are followed in their correct order.

There are 2 ways of using the Case Consultation Protocol:

- Your group can consider a case (i.e. have one person present a case), which requires around an hour.
- Your group can have a series of cases presented (e.g. you may wish to have all group members present their own case). If you are having multiple cases presented, you should complete the first case in full, then have a 15-minute break, negotiate roles for the second presentation, and then complete that case in full. This process should then be repeated for each additional case.

Process

This is a structured process, with clear time boundaries and roles.

Your small group will spend 45 minutes focusing on the case being presented. Every participant is required to participate in this group in different ways:

- The Case Presenter will prepare a brief description of the case, focussing on the core elements. A case can relate to an issue, a community or an initiative.
- The Facilitator: The Designated Authority will lead the process.
- The Consultants: The group (including the Designated Authority) are Consultants charged with giving good consultation to the Case Presenter.

The usual rules apply about listening to others, showing respect, and so on.

Confidentiality is a particularly important component of this process, as people may reveal sensitive information about themselves, their organisation, or their partner organisations. It is critical that each participant agrees upfront to the conventions of Chatham House Rules (that is, you can take the ideas raised but you cannot name any individual or organisation or share the ideas in a way that would identify the individuals or organisations involved).

Roles

1. Case Presenter

- Your role as Case Presenter is to present the case (story). This is an opportunity for you to learn by exploring different ways of thinking about the case.
- A successful change agent needs to know what is essential and how to ask for help. So as Case Presenter you need to:
 - Present your case verbally in an engaging story.
 - Present your story briefly. Keep the story short (5 minutes) so that there is adequate time for questions and feedback.
 - Avoid jargon.
 - Develop one or two focus questions for the consultation (although the group may choose to focus on other elements of the case).
- The Case Presenter does not need to do an analysis or present solutions. That is the role of the group. Just tell the story.

2. Designated Authority

- Your role is to guide the group in helping the Case Presenter to learn from their case.
- You are responsible for the effective running of the session including:
 - Sticking to the time limit, particularly making sure the Case Presenter doesn't take more than 5 minutes to tell their story.
 - Ensuring the consultants stay on track.

- Making sure that the overall purpose of helping the Case Presenter is being achieved.
- You perform the traditional social functions of an authority role in that you are responsible for the functioning of the group. The group may at times fall out of role (e.g. start offering premature solutions) and your role is to gently remind them of the agreed process. This is a critical role in helping the group have a different conversation that generates new insights.

3. Consultants

- Your purpose is to help the Case Presenter understand their situation better, their role in it and what options would allow better outcomes. It may look as if the Case Presenter is doing all the work, but your challenge is to listen – really listen. Listen to what is said and not said. What is not said includes the information that is not provided, as well as nonverbal communication that is provided, such as facial expressions and other body language.
- In consultation you will need to increase understanding and promote learning. So the usual techniques are important:
 - Listening actively.
 - Reflecting back.
 - Questioning effectively – asking open questions that promote insight.
 - Challenging the Case Presenter if it is useful to do so.
- Above all be present – mentally and physically!

Session Guide - Process

1. The Case Presenter presents facts.	5 Minutes
2. The Designated Authority facilitates the group asking 'Fact Questions' to the Case Presenter. The purpose of this is to get more data and information from the Case Presenter, to inform the diagnostic and action phases of the discussion. It is not a time to offer advice, suggest an action or interpret what is going on.	10 Minutes
3. The Case Presenter watches and listens while the Consultants offer potential diagnoses of the situation and its causes, as well as The role of being played by the Case Presenter.	15 Minutes
4. The Case Presenter watches and listens while the Consultants offer potential action steps and reflection questions.	10 Minutes
5. The Case Presenter reflects on what she/he heard.	5 Minutes
6. The group reflects on how they performed their roles and any improvements to make for future rounds.	5 Minutes

The following are some possible questions – these are a guide only but can be helpful in digging deeper.

Fact Questions (asked directly to the Case Presenter).

1. Who are the major players?
2. What is your role?
3. What are their formal relationships? Informal alliances?
4. Where is the senior authority on the issue?
5. What have you done so far to work the problem?
6. What have you decided not to do?
7. What would success look like to you?
8. Who is responsible for... .?
9. Where does your role sit structurally?
10. What is in it for you?

Diagnostic Questions (questions that are considered by the group of Consultants to interpret and make sense of the adaptive challenge faced by the Case Presenter). These questions are not for the Case Presenter to answer.

1. What are the Case Presenter's stakes?
2. What issues or values does the Case Presenter represent to the group?
3. What are the underlying or hidden issues?
4. What are the value choices the Case Presenter has to make?
5. How does the situation look to the other key players?
6. What options are off the table for the Case Presenter and why?
7. What has the Case Presenter contributed to the problem? What is her/his piece of the mess?
8. What possible interpretations has the Case Presenter been unwilling to consider?
9. What would success look like to the players other than the Case Presenter?
10. What adaptive work has been undertaken? A shift in which values and beliefs will allow progress to be made?
11. What are the losses for all factions?