

Issue focus

Formulate the issue/problem/task in such a way that participants are clear about and agree on the focus of the work.

Risk if not scaffolded

Participants are concerned with very disparate issues and are not able to engage meaningfully in shared concerns.

Structuring work process

Structure the work process clearly, so that the group focusses on one type of task at a time rather than talking about all kinds of things at the same time.

Risk if not scaffolded

The group jumbles storytelling, complaining, inquiry, analysis, idea generation, evaluation, etc. without completing any task.

Learning

Support participants to reflect on insights and learning at regular intervals, in order to strengthen long-term learning.

Risk if not scaffolded

Participants do not notice insights and skill acquisition and therefore relapse into conventional patterns after the process, instead of applying new knowledge and skills.

Decongealing

Support participants in stepping out of ingrained frames of mind in order to approach the issues in creative and openminded ways.

Risk if not scaffolded

Participants remain limited by fixed unreflected assumptions, patterns of reasoning and positions.

Safe space

Build a sense of safe space, where participants feel at ease with the context and with each other.

Risk if not scaffolded

Participants feel insecure, are reserved and hold back.

Rapport

Create favourable conditions for participants to connect with each other, establish rapport and even build long-term relationships.

Risk if not scaffolded

Conversations remain on a superficial level due to lack of rapport and trust; failure to establish lasting personal relationships that might ease communication in future interactions.

Open up communication

Intervene in order to open up communication so that participants can speak freely about personal experiences, concerns and ideas, even if these may concern sensitive matters.

Risk if not scaffolded

People do not express their personal experiences; there are topics that are unspeakable even though they might be crucial to include in deliberations.

Dialogue in diversity

Surface and transform tensions and conflictual relationships among the participants, so that differences in perspectives and interests can be worked with productively.

Risk if not scaffolded

Conversations are permeated by debating, lack of openness; thinking remains restricted to pre-existing perspectives.

Management of energy levels

Design the work process in order to support energy levels and concentration, e.g. by varying work forms and having participants move about in the room.

Risk if not scaffolded

People get bored and become distracted and/or passive.

Commitment

Take care to mobilize the participants' sense of hope about achieving meaningful outcomes and thereby personal commitment to engage in the team's work.

Risk if not scaffolded

People feel powerless and therefore not motivated to engage actively; People expect that someone else should take action.

Focus on possibilities

Shift the focus from talking about problems, obstacles, blaming and frustrations towards possibilities.

Risk if not scaffolded

Participants remain stuck in a position of frustration and blaming; There is a lack of creative and realistic ideas about action.

Expansion of scope of care

Support the expansion of the participants' scope of caring to include a larger whole.

Risk if not scaffolded

People remain identified with partial interests, have a narrow focus of attention and do not consider the needs of the whole system.

Accountability

Strengthen the participants' feeling of accountability for taking action and achieving desired outcomes.

Risk if not scaffolded

No action ensues, because no one feels accountable.

Self-clarification

Support participants in clarifying the their own concerns, needs, interests and preferences.

Risk if not scaffolded

Participants are weakly committed, because proposals and decisions are not anchored in true needs.

Complexity awareness

Support inquiry into the complex conditions, causal connections and potential consequences so that participants gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue complex.

Risk if not scaffolded

The quality of proposals and decisions is low because significant aspects of the issue complex have not been considered.

Whole system/Context awareness

Supporting the emergence of a stronger whole system and context awareness.

Risk if not scaffolded

The need to adapt to changing conditions is ignored; Focus remains narrow and strategies only address parts of the system; Time horizon is short.

Stakeholder awareness

Support the development of an awareness of the spectrum of relevant stakeholders and an understanding of their respective interests and perspectives.

Risk if not scaffolded

Significant stakeholders and their views are not considered in strategy development; Potential resistance is not foreseen; Resources that might be useful are not mobilized.

Perspective awareness

Support an increased awareness of the properties of different perspectives that may be used in making sense of the issue, so that participants can productively use several perspectives when deliberating causality and potential actions.

Risk if not scaffolded

Participants remain embedded in single perspectives; measures do not draw on the richness of different perspectives; Conversations become debates between fixed positions.

Common ground

Develop a shared description of the issue complex and consensus on recommendations.

Risk if not scaffolded

Communication breaks down because of disparate narratives of the situation; Action is impeded by unresolved conflicts about appropriate strategy.

Mobilize individuals' resources

Creating favourable conditions for mobilizing individual participants' knowledge, skills, creativity and other resources, so that they become available for the team's work.

Risk if not scaffolded

Outcomes remain suboptimal, because available resources were not mobilized; Failure to surface creative ideas; Unintended negative consequences follow, because significant viewpoints were not surfaced.

Creativity

Create conditions that stimulate a high level of creativity in developing ideas.

Risk if not scaffolded

Outcomes remain suboptimal because creative ideas fail to surface.

Preempt domination

Prevent asymmetrical power relations (such as differences in status) from dampening open and democratic communication.

Risk if not scaffolded

Persons with high rank or expansive personalities dominate conversations while others remain silent.

Decision-making

Support the decision-making process, so that the process leads to well-founded concrete decisions.

Risk if not scaffolded

People talk a lot and generate ideas, but firm decisions are not made.

Support implementation

Support the group in planning the different steps in implementing decisions.

Risk if not scaffolded

Agreed measures are not implemented, because accountability is unclear, or implementation is poorly organized.