

Guideline for Peer Consultation

The guideline for peer consultation offers a structure for getting quickly to the point, and for stimulating all participants to contribute creatively.

Peer Consultation is a method for reflecting on practice with colleagues, and to generate ideas about effective behaviour in the professional environment.

Starting up. Ask participants on what issues they whish to consult the others. Allocate the available time. Start with the issue that attracts most attention.

It is tempting to work out an issue as soon as someone starts telling his/her case. This should be prevented.

Prevent too much explanation. There is room for clarification in step 2.

Formulating the question. The storyteller explains just enough for others to have some understanding of the issue.

Clarification. The participants ask questions for clarification, and the storyteller gives answers. This goes on until participants think they can start the analysis.

Analysis. Choose a tool and reframe the situation in this language. What does it make you understand about what is happening?

Reformulating the question. The storyteller rephrases the question for which (s)he likes to hear suggestions.

Advice. The participants tell what they would do if they were in the position of the storyteller.

Conclusions. The storyteller tells what advices are most useful to him/her, and why.

This saves you a lot of time!

Prevent discussion. If someone disagrees with the question of one other, (s)he should formulate his/her own.

There is a strong temptation to give advices or judgements. Don't do it before step 5!

This is the moment to make use of one of the **models**. Make a choice of the tool that fits best.

At this stage the question is usually much clearer than at the start. It is important that the storyteller rephrases it him/herself.

Prevent discussion. If someone disagrees with the advice of one other, (s)he should formulate his/her own.

There are no right or wrong answers. What works for one might not be a solution for another. Only the storyteller can judge what fits him/her best.

Wrapping up. Each participant shares with the others what (s)he takes along from this consultation. If applicable, a new appointment is set.

After some consultations the need for a strict structure usually fades away. Use it as long as people find it useful.

If discussions are going to take more time, and it becomes difficult to give attention to all participants, it might be time to brush up the structure again.

Usually others will recognise aspects of the issue under discussion. Some advices will be applicable for them too. It is worthwhile to share this, but it can distract the attention if this is done during the consultation.

Therefore it is better to save these insights for the wrapping up stage.