



Facilitating Constructive Contributions

Dealing with Difficult Behaviors, Helping People
Share from a Better Place

CommonKnowledge



Welcome



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The Changing Role of Libraries

Libraries are serving as community hubs

- Librarians often asked to assume role of facilitator
- Most are “learning by doing”

High level of interest in more training to build facilitation skills

Today is second of two webinars for more experienced facilitators (Feb. 7 topic was Multi-Dimensional Listening)

Exploring cross-cutting skills that serve a library’s internal and community-facing purposes

Lead Presenter



Susan Stuart Clark

Founder & Director of Common Knowledge Group (www.ckgroup.org)

- Community engagement trainer, consultant, researcher
- Research Deputy with Kettering Foundation
- Board member National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (nccd.org) which is leading Libraries Transforming Communities project with ALA
- Recently designed and conducted Libraries Lead the Way community engagement and facilitation skills program

Poll Questions

• **Question #1** *Which common behavior in meetings do you find most challenging as a facilitator?*

- a) *Dominates, won't share air time*
- b) *Rambles; wanders off topic*
- c) *Negative about everything*
- d) *Silent*
- e) *Other*

Poll Questions

- **Question #2**

What is your experience facilitating difficult behaviors in community meetings?

- a) I'm pretty comfortable with what comes up*
- b) I've had a mix of good and bad experiences*
- c) I'm too nervous to try*

Facilitating Constructive Contributions

- I Shifting your perspective
- II Designing for inclusive participation
- III Preparing to facilitate
- IV Supporting the dialogue

Then: Q&A about specific examples

What many of us are afraid will happen



Shift Your Perspective

~~Difficult people~~

Difficult behavior

Shift Your Perspective

~~Difficult people~~

~~Difficult behavior~~

**Fearful or frustrated
contributor**

Foundational premise:

Everyone has something
valuable to contribute

Featured Librarians



Eileen Labrador, San Diego Public Library

- Supervising Librarian, Area III
- System-wide lead on Harwood Community Conversations, San Diego STEM Ecosystem and Out of the Shadows Program
- Chair, Emergency Operations Committee



Patrick Remer, Contra Costa County Library

- Senior Community Library Manager
- Facilitating community process for new Pleasant Hill Library building
- Advisor to CSL's Early Learning with Families (ELF) Initiative and Touchpoints in Libraries Community Level Trainer

Examples of collaborative learning

- “Harwood”-style community meetings
- Libraries Lead the Way
- Touchpoints training sessions
- Informal group encounters in the library



Facilitating Constructive Contributions

Meeting design

- Purpose/Framing
- Structure

Preparing to facilitate

- Understanding your role
- Understanding your audience

Supporting the dialogue

- What you do
- What the group does

“Recipes give us confidence,
but we have to cook with the
ingredients we have.”

Patrick Remer



Designing for Inclusive Participation

- Purpose/Framing
- Structure

Comparing Debate and Dialogue

Debate	Dialogue
Two Sides	Multiple perspectives
Listen to enhance position	Listen to learn and connect
Winners and losers	Exchange for mutual understanding
Stressful; can easily trigger reactivity	Opens path to new possibilities

Today's focus: Planning & facilitating

Group generated learning

experience that develops

shared understanding about a

situation of common concern

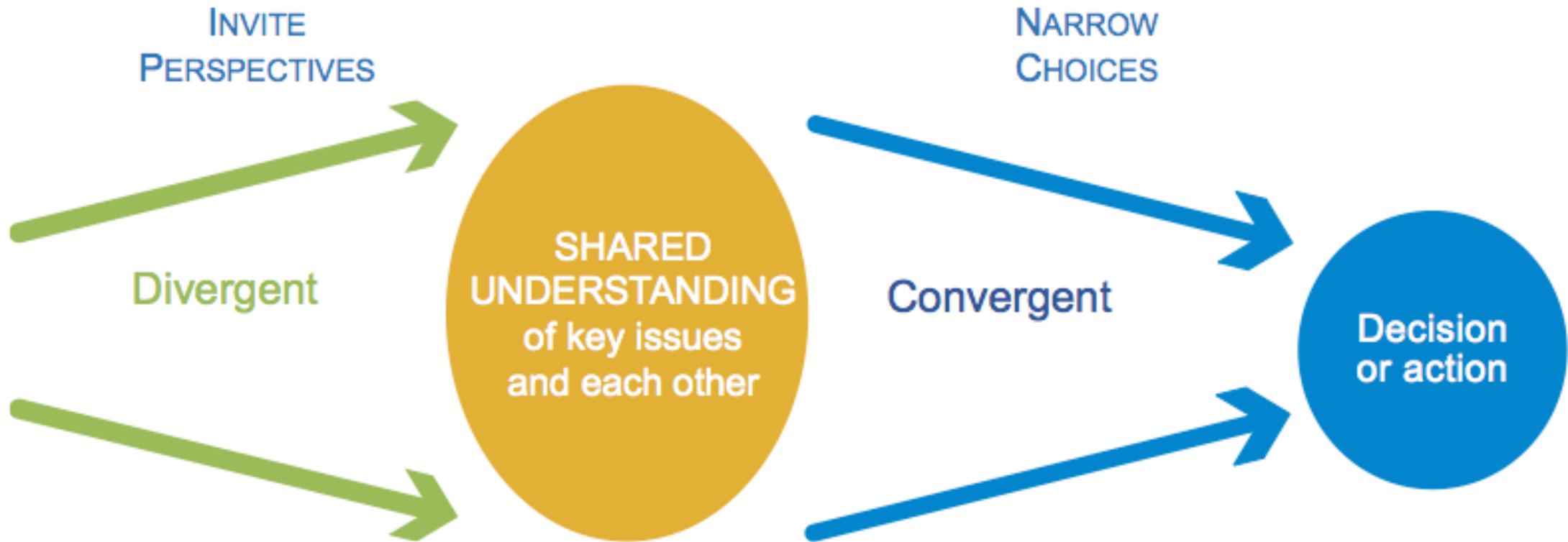
Designing for Constructive Contributions

1 – Framing the conversation as an inclusive dialogue

- Set expectations that the purpose is to learn
- There are no right or wrong answers
- Jointly developing a shared understanding about the situation



The “Arc” of a Conversation



Designing for Constructive Contributions



- 2 – Structure with multiple occasions and multiple formats for sharing
- When people walk in the room
 - Icebreaker; get people talking with a few others as soon as possible
 - Mix of large group and small group
 - Provide chances to reflect and write solo before sharing
 - On sensitive topics, comments can be drawn out of a box



III

Preparing to Facilitate

- Your role
- Your audience

Librarian Service versus Facilitation

Familiar Roles

- *Enforce rules of conduct*
- *Moderate tightly scheduled programming*
- *Teach a class*

Librarian Service versus Facilitation

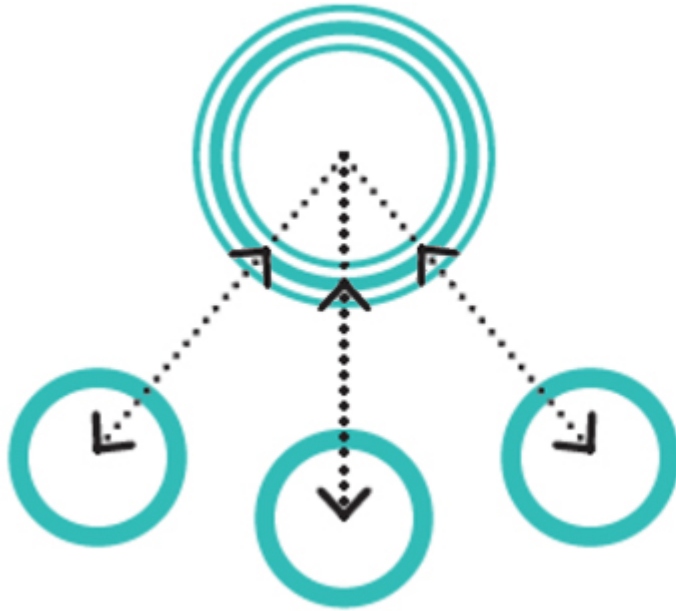
Familiar Roles

- *Enforce rules of conduct*
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Different Role

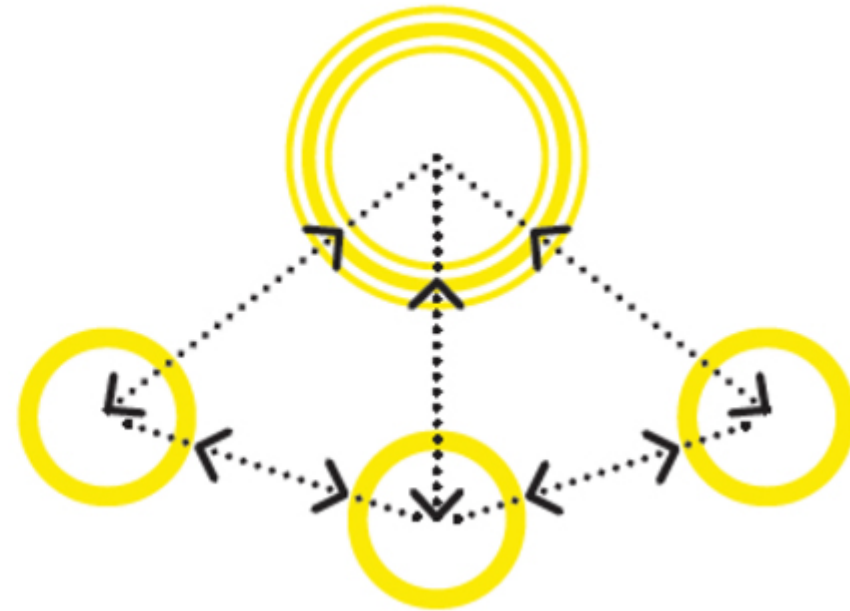
- *Create a sense of shared purpose*
- *Enlist the whole group in the learning experience*
- *Encourage contributions from all kinds of participants*

Beginning facilitation



Facilitator as “traffic control”; at the center of the group

More advanced facilitation



Facilitator helps people in the room engage with each other

Understanding Yourself & Your Role

What is your starting point?

- Mindset of authentic facilitation
- Vulnerability and transparency
- Touchpoints: “Recognize what you bring to the interaction.”



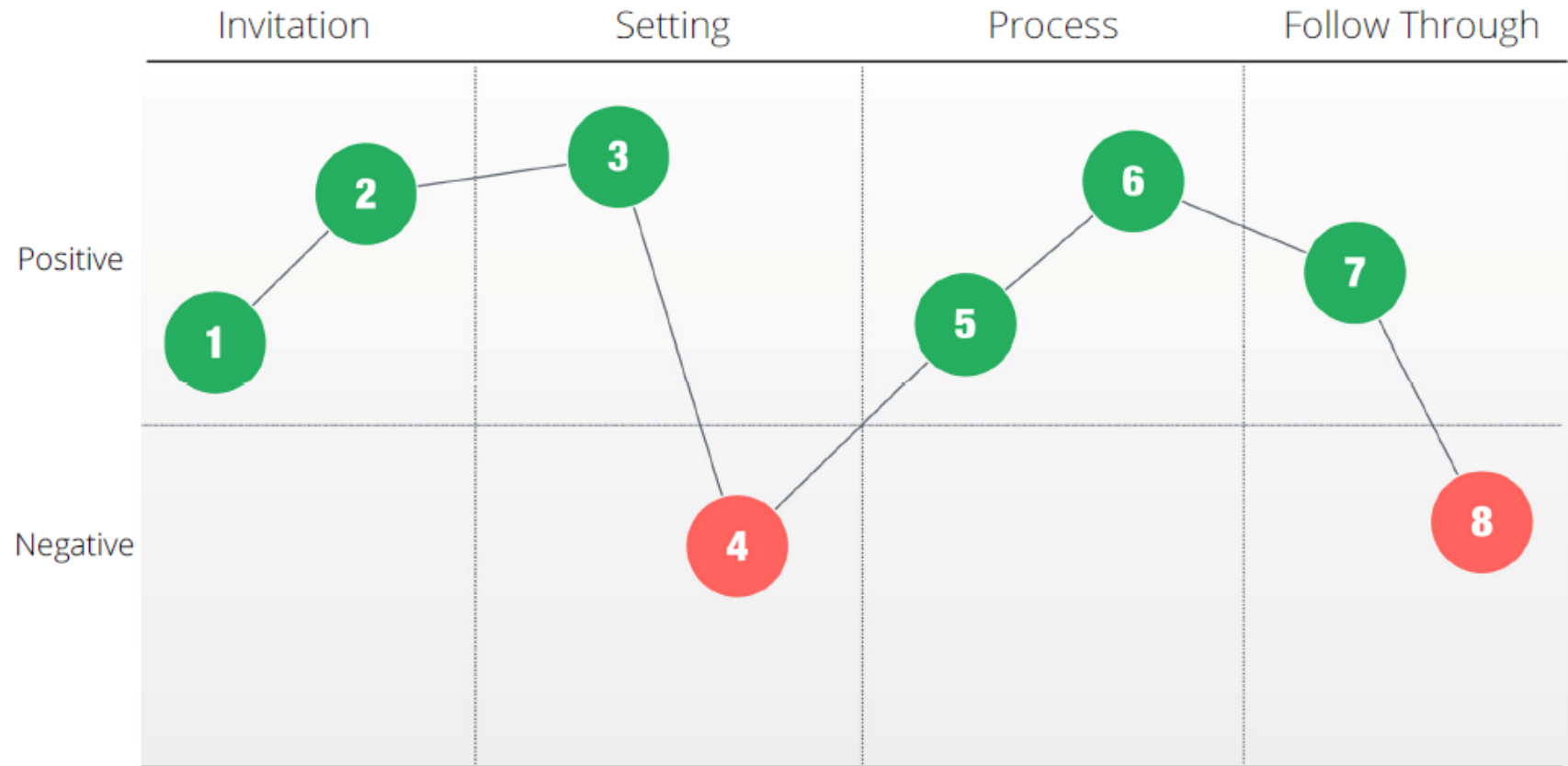
Understanding Your Audience

Be Curious About Your Participants

- How many will know each other?
- Will they bring more positive or more negative experiences with past meetings?
- What cultural and generational variables do you anticipate?
- Are there recent developments to be sensitive to?



Mapping the Participant Journey



1. Invitation received from trusted source ⁺	3. Food and childcare are available ⁺	5. Conversation guidelines create feelings of safety ⁺	7. Prompt "thank you" with next steps ⁺
2. Personal phone call to follow up on invitation ⁺	4. No greeting or support to get settled ⁻	6. There are numerous opportunities to share ⁺	8. No follow up within the next few weeks ⁻

IV

Supporting the Dialogue

- What you do
- What the group does

Sample Conversation Guidelines

- Treat each other with respect
- Listen to learn
- Help make sure everyone has a chance to share
- Assume good intentions
- Your questions are valuable



Key practice: Aligning group expectations

- Recognize that we all bring a variety of expectations
- Clarify meeting purpose; create space for people to adjust their expectations
- Create early opportunities for people to contribute
- Consistently model inclusion



Key practice: Navigating uncertainty together

- Encourage persistent curiosity
- Embrace the messiness of the process
- Create opportunities for participants to share reactions
- Allow the group to drive the meaning-making



Modeling Authentic Facilitation

Someone dominates?

- Give them a different way to share (e.g., via worksheet)
- Find out what they feel has not been heard so it can be captured
- Refer back to the guidelines and the benefits of learning together
- Make the challenge transparent: “What I’m struggling with is wanting to hear what you are sharing while also needing to hear multiple perspectives to get to shared understanding”
- If needed, suggest a separate conversation after the meeting or have a “designated listener” take them out in the hall.

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Question & Answer

Resources for Facilitators

- **Recording of Feb 7 webinar: Facilitating Multi-Dimensional Listening**
vimeo.com/254771490
- **Habits of Mind** elf2.library.ca.gov/how/resources.html
- **Harwood Public Innovations for CA Public Libraries**
www.library.ca.gov/services/to-libraries/harwood/
- **Libraries Lead the Way** northnetlibs.org/libraries-lead-the-way/
- **Libraries Transforming Communities -- ALA & NCDD:** www.ala.org/ltc-models

Thank You!



A Resource for Libraries

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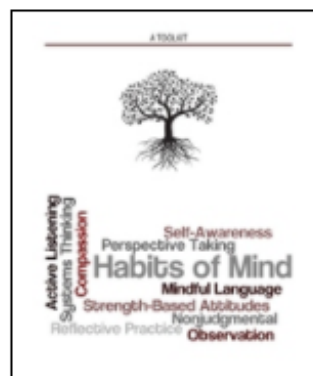
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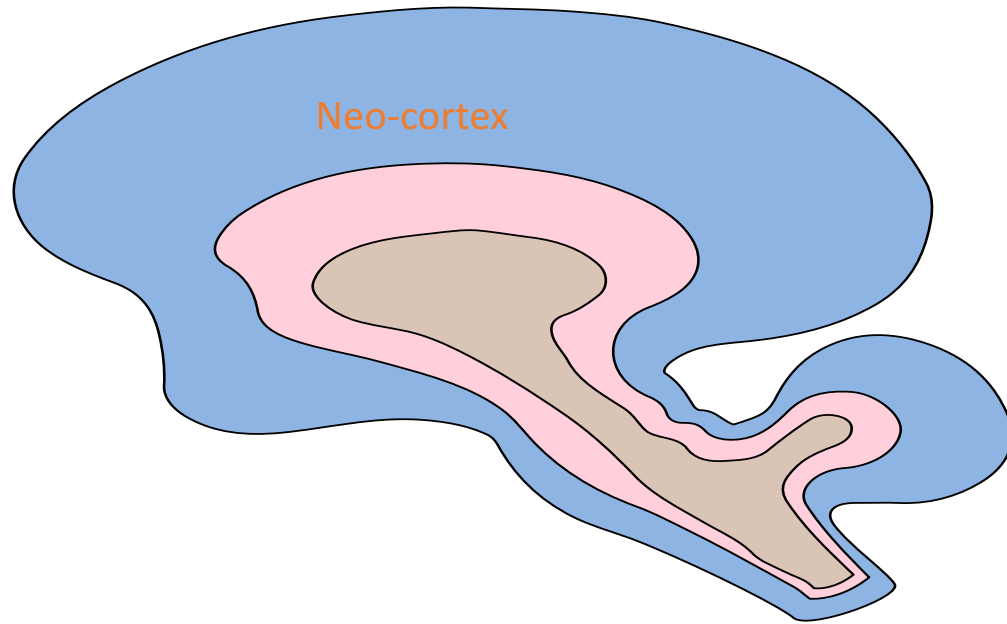
Resources

Habits of Mind: A Toolkit

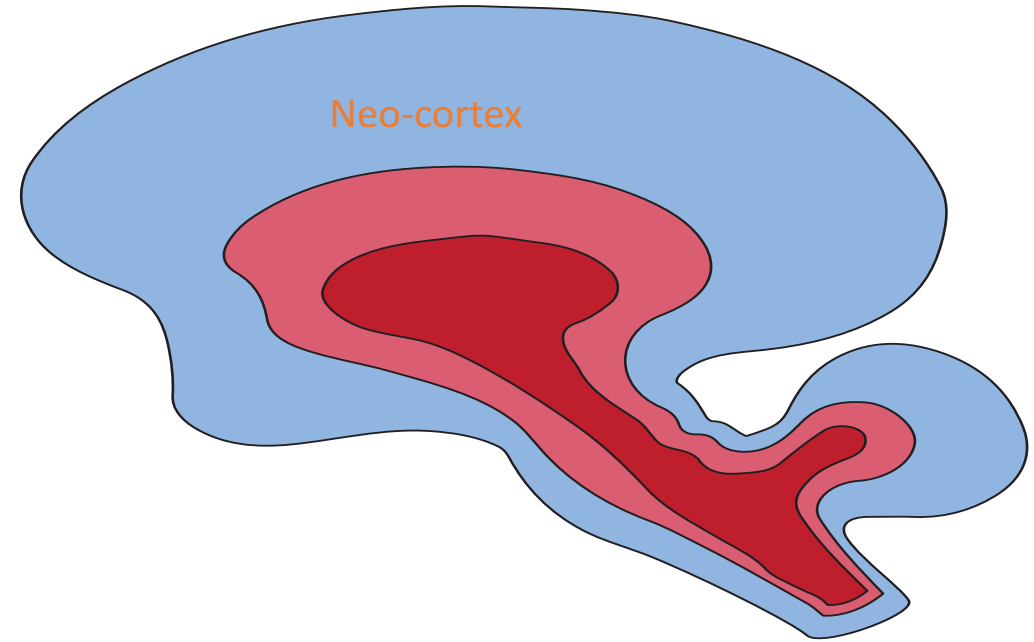


This **Habits of Mind Toolkit** grew out of the *Touchpoints in Libraries* training experience in California. It is intended as a bridge between the full *Touchpoints in Libraries* training and more informal group discussions regarding the foundational "habits of mind" or skills that underlie *Touchpoints*, as well as any approach to effectively interacting with others. The Toolkit includes an introduction and seven sections. Each section highlights a different habit of mind, and includes a one-page overview about the skill followed by a series of short, interactive exercises designed to provide a springboard for group exploration and discussion.

Create the conditions for learning



Calm: Ready to listen, learn and participate



Flooded: Anger or fear, fight or flight