

Troika Consult Exercise



You can help people gain insight on issues they face and unleash local wisdom for addressing them. In quick round robin “consultations,” individuals ask for help and get advice immediately from two others. Peer-to-peer coaching helps with discovering everyday solutions, revealing patterns, and refining prototypes. This is a simple and effective way to extend coaching support for individuals beyond formal reporting relationships.

Five Structural Elements

1. Structuring Invitation
 - Invite the group to explore the questions “What is your challenge?” and “What kind of help do you need?”
2. How Space Is Arranged and Materials Needed
 - Any number of small groups of 3 chairs, knee-to-knee seating preferred. No table!
3. How Participation Is Distributed
 - In each round, one participant is the “client,” the others are “consultants”
 - Everyone has an equal opportunity to receive and give coaching
4. How Groups Are Configured
 - Groups of 3
 - People with diverse backgrounds and perspectives are most helpful
5. Sequence of Steps and Time Allocation
 - Invite participants to reflect on the consulting question (the challenge and the help needed) they plan to ask when they are the clients. 1 min.
 - Groups have first client share his or her question. 1-2 min.
 - Consultants ask the client clarifying questions. 1-2 min.
 - Client turns around with his or her back facing the consultants
 - Together, the consultants generate ideas, suggestions, coaching advice. 4-5 min.
 - Client turns around and shares what was most valuable about the experience. 1-2 min.
 - Groups switch to next person and repeat steps.

Tips and Traps

- Invite participants to form groups with mixed roles/functions
- Suggest that participants critique themselves when they fall into traps (e.g., like jumping to conclusions)
- Have the participants try to notice the pattern of support offered. The ideal is to respectfully provoke by telling the client “what you see that you think they do not see”
- Tell participants to take risks while maintaining empathy
- If the first-round yields coaching that is not good enough, do a second round
- Beware that two rounds of 10 minutes per client is more effective than one round of 20 minutes per client.
- Keep the spaces safe: if you share anything, do it judiciously
- Questions that spark self-understanding or self-correction may be more powerful than advice about what to do
- Tell clients to try and stay focused on self-reflection by asking, “What is happening here? How am I experiencing what is happening?”
- Make Troika Consulting routine in meetings and conferences

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Brief Summary of Steps and Schedule

1. Form groups of three
2. 10 minutes per person
3. Spend 1 – 2 minutes sharing your question
4. Spend 1 – 2 min having the consultants ask you clarifying questions
5. Spend 4 – 5 minutes receiving feedback and advice from your consultants
6. Spend 1 – 2 minutes sharing what you heard and what was most valuable
7. Switch to the next person

Adapted from (last accessed 9.8.2019):
<http://www.liberatingstructures.com/8-troika-consulting/>