



Common Ground Readiness Tool

Purpose

- To assess whether the group has sufficient shared purpose and common values

Materials

- Flip chart with markers, or laptop with projection capabilities

“Are we ready, and do we have sufficient common ground and trust upon which to stand and work together?”

This is one of the important readiness assessment questions that need to be asked and explored before embarking on any group venture. Ensuring that there are reasonable conditions for success is a prudent exercise to engage in before spending time and valuable resources. So what do we mean by ‘common ground’ and how do we go about creating this shared foundation?

Facilitation Instructions

1. Sit in a circle, and invite each participant to reflect on the following two questions:
 - What does a successful outcome look like? (Clarify intent and purpose.)
 - What do I really care about and am committed to? (Acknowledge core values.)
2. Give participants five minutes to write their answers in quiet reflection.
3. Invite each person to share their reflections without any interruption from the group.
4. After everyone has spoken, begin an inquiry to discover what the participants have in common. Invite comments on what people observe that the group has in common and record answers under the heading CONVERGENCE.
5. Repeat the process by identifying and recording those things that presently illustrate the DIVERGENCE in the group.
6. Then ask the group whether there is sufficient common ground upon which to stand and begin the work based on this conversation.
7. If the group agrees to move ahead then ask people to commit to carrying both the Convergence and Divergence lists forward.
8. At the end of each subsequent meeting it is valuable to review the Convergence list to see if the common ground is holding and the Divergence list to see if some issues have resolved themselves and have moved over to form aspects of convergence.