

Process Distinctions

	Focuses significantly on...						
Processes	Exploration	Conflict Transformation	Decision Making	Collaborative Action	Size of Group	Type of Session (excluding prep sessions)	Participant Selection
21st Century Town Meeting			X		Hundreds to thousands in 1 room at small tables	All-day meeting	Open; recruit for representativeness
Appreciative Inquiry Summit	X			X	From 20 to 2,000	4 to 6-day summit	Internal and external stakeholders
Bohm Dialogue	X		x		Small group	No set length or number of meetings	Open or invitation
Charrettes			X	x	A small team of professionals and a much larger group of stakeholders	Intense work sessions last 1-3 days typically; some last 1-2 weeks	Participants represent a range of organized groups, but others with a stake in the issue are encouraged to attend
Citizen Choicework			X		Multiple small groups	1 session, ranging from 2 hours to all day	Open; recruit for representativeness
Citizens Jury			X		Small group	5-day meeting	Random selection
Compassionate Listening	x	X			2 to 200 people; usually fewer than 30	Varies between 30 min and 3 days, depending on how many people are involved	Open to whoever is drawn; often listeners are brought in to hear the stories of oppressed or oppressors
Consensus Conference			X		Large group	2 weekends for participants to prepare, 2-4 day conference	Random selection
Conversation Café	X	x			Single or multiple small groups	1 90-minute session	Open; publicize to encourage representativeness
Deliberative Polling			X		Up to several hundred people in small groups in 1 room	Weekend-long meeting	Random selection
Future Search		x	x	X	60 to 80 people	3 days	All inclusive (attempts to bring in all involved)

The Engagement Streams Framework (in Excel, PDF, and comic!) can always be downloaded from www.ncdd.org/streams.

Descriptions of Processes

AmericaSpeaks' 21st Century Town Meetings enable the general public to give those in leadership positions direct, substantive feedback on key issues. Each meeting engages hundreds or thousands of general interest citizens at a time, utilizing innovative technology to effectively and quickly summarize citizen input.

www.americaspeaks.org

Appreciative Inquiry is a change method that encourages stakeholders to explore the best of the past and present in their organizations and communities. AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential.

www.appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu

Created by late physicist David Bohm, **Bohm (or Bohmian) Dialogue** is focused on attending to and discussing individual internal dynamics—assumptions, beliefs, motivations, etc. The idea is not to eliminate them from happening, but to surface them in the conversation in a way that furthers the dialogue.

www.david-bohm.net/dialogue

A **Charrette** is a collaborative and consensus-building design methodology that incorporates input from all stakeholders (the developer, relevant government agencies, and the community). A "charrette team" of experts uses stakeholder input in an continual "feedback loop" to prepare and refine a plan for development with the goal of reaching consensus among stakeholders. Charrettes, which combine modern design studio and town meeting, help overcome inertia and create meaningful master plans.

www.charretteinstitute.org

Public Agenda's Citizen Choicework helps citizens confront tough choices in productive ways. Participants work through values conflicts and practical tradeoffs, and develop a sense of priorities and direction. Key principles include nonpartisan local leadership, inclusive participation, and unbiased discussion materials that "start where the public starts."

www.publicagenda.org

The **Citizens Jury** process is a method for gathering a microcosm of the public, having them attend five days of hearings, deliberate among themselves and then issue findings and recommendations on the issue they have discussed.

www.jefferson-center.org

In **Compassionate Listening**, listeners use reflection and skilled inquiry to help speakers deepen their own understanding and awareness. CL engenders generative listening which is non-judgmental, questions that are non-adversarial, and an ability to remain open when witnessing strong feelings and divergent viewpoints. The process can help create the safety necessary for honest, respectful dialogue and sustainable solutions.

www.compassionatelisting.org

Developed in Denmark, **Consensus Conferences** typically involve a group of citizens with varied backgrounds who meet to discuss issues of a scientific or technical nature. The conference has two stages: the first involves small group meetings with experts to discuss the issues and work towards consensus. The second stage assembles experts, media and the public where the conference's main observations and conclusions are presented.

www.ncdd.org/rc/item/1492

Conversation Cafés are hosted conversations which are usually held in a public setting like a coffee shop or bookstore, where anyone is welcome to join. A simple format helps people feel at ease and gives everyone who wants to a chance to speak.

www.conversationcafe.org

Deliberative Polling combines deliberation in small group discussions with scientific random sampling to provide public consultation for public policy and for electoral issues. Members of a random sample are polled, and then some members are invited to gather at a single place to discuss the issues after they have examined balanced briefing materials. Participants engage in dialogue with competing experts and political leaders based on questions they develop in small group discussions with trained moderators.

<http://cdd.stanford.edu>

Used by communities and organizations, **Future Search** is a unique planning method which enables large, diverse groups to validate a common mission, take responsibility for action, and develop commitment to implementation. The method, which allows the entire group to be in dialogue when necessary, is especially useful in uncertain, fast-changing situations when it is important that everyone have the same large picture in order to act responsibly.

www.futuresearch.net

Process Distinctions (continued)

Processes	Focuses significantly on...				Size of Group	Type of Session (excluding prep sessions)	Participant Selection
	Exploration	Conflict Transformation	Decision Making	Collaborative Action			
Intergroup Dialogue	X	X		x	Single or multiple small groups	Regular weekly meetings of 2-3 hours	Open; recruit for representativeness
National Issues Forums			X		Up to hundreds in 1 room at small tables	1 two-hour meeting	Open; recruit for representativeness
Open Space Technology	X			x	Up to hundreds in 1 room, then break up in interest groups multiple times	3 days	Varies
Public Conversations Project dialogue		X			Small group	Multiple 2-hour sessions	Involves all sides of an existing conflict
Socrates Café	X				3 to 30 people	1-2 hours	Whoever is in the class or at the meeting, or whoever responds to the flyers or articles
Study Circles	x		x	X	Up to hundreds meeting in separate small groups; all come together later for Action Forum	4 to 6 2-hour sessions	Open; recruit for representativeness
Sustained Dialogue		X	x	x	Small group	Numerous 2- to 3-hour sessions	Open; recruit for representativeness among conflicting groups
Victim Offender Mediation		X			Small group	Multiple 2- to 3-hour sessions	All inclusive (attempts to bring in all involved)
Wisdom Circle	X				Small group (3-12 people)	One or more sessions lasting 1-3 hours; ongoing sessions are ideal	Usually used with an existing group
Wisdom Council	X		x	x	10-12 people initially (and sometimes periodically), then entire community	Several-day session with group of 12, followed by informal large-scale dialogue	Initial 10-12 are randomly selected from community; broader segment is open to everyone
World Café	X				Up to hundreds in 1 room at tables of four	Single event ranging from 90 minutes to 3 days	Often held at events, involving all attendees; otherwise, invitations boost representativeness

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Descriptions of Processes

Intergroup Dialogues are face-to-face meetings of people from at least two different social identity groups. They are designed to offer an open and inclusive space where participants can foster a deeper understanding of diversity and justice issues through participation in experiential activities, individual and small group reflections, and dialogues.

www.umich.edu/~igrc/ and www.depts.washington.edu/sswwweb/idea/

National Issues Forums offer citizens the opportunity to join together to deliberate, to make choices with others about ways to approach difficult issues and to work toward creating reasoned public judgment. NIF is known for its careful issue framing and quality issue guides which outline 3 or 4 different viewpoints.

www.nifi.org

Open Space Technology is a self-organizing practice that invites people to take responsibility for what they care about. In Open Space, a marketplace of inquiry is created where people offer topics they are passionate about and reflect and learn from one another. It is an innovative approach to creating whole systems change and inspiring creativity and leadership among participants.

www.openspaceworld.org

The Public Conversations Project helps people with fundamental disagreements over divisive issues develop the mutual understanding and trust essential for strong communities and positive action. Their dialogue model is characterized by a careful preparatory phase in which all stakeholders/sides are interviewed and prepared for the dialogue process.

www.publicconversations.org

Socrates Cafés and other forms of Socratic Dialogue encourage groups inside and outside the classroom to engage in robust philosophical inquiry. The Cafés consist of spontaneous yet rigorous dialogue that inspires people to articulate and discover their unique philosophical perspectives and worldview. They don't force consensus or closure, but are open-ended and can be considered a success if there are more questions at the end than there were at the outset.

www.philosopher.org

Study Circles enable communities to strengthen their own ability to solve problems by bringing large numbers of people together in dialogue across divides of race, income, age, and political viewpoints. Study Circles combine dialogue, deliberation, and community organizing techniques, enabling public talk to build understanding, explore a range of solutions, and serve as a catalyst for social, political, and policy change.

www.everyday-democracy.org

Sustained Dialogue is a process for transforming and building the relationships that are essential to democratic political and economic practice. SD is not a problem-solving workshop; it is a sustained interaction to transform and build relationships among members of deeply conflicted groups so that they may effectively deal with practical problems. As a process that develops over time through a sequence of meetings, SD seems to move through a series of recognizable phases including a deliberative "scenario-building" stage and an "acting together" stage.

www.sustaineddialogue.org

Victim Offender Mediation is a restorative justice process that allows the victim of a crime and the person who committed that crime to talk to each other about what happened, the effects of the crime on their lives, and their feelings about it. They may choose to create a mutually agreeable plan to repair any damages that occurred as a result of the crime. In some practices, the victim and the offender are joined by family and community members or others.

www.voma.org

A **Wisdom Circle** is a small group dialogue designed to encourage people to listen and speak from the heart in a spirit of inquiry. By opening and closing the circle with a simple ritual of the group's choosing, using a talking object, and welcoming silence, a safe space is created where participants can be trusting, authentic, caring, and open to change. Also referred to as Council process and Listening Circles.

www.wisdomcircle.org

Wisdom Councils are microcosms of larger systems like cities and organizations that engage in a creative, thoughtful exploration of the issues affecting the system. A specialized facilitation process is used called "Dynamic Facilitation" - a nonlinear approach for addressing complex issues that allows shared insights and aligned action to emerge. The outcomes of the Wisdom Council, which are reported back to the community, can catalyze further dialogue, self-organizing action and change throughout the larger system.

www.wisedemocracy.org

World Cafés enable groups of people to participate together in evolving rounds of dialogue with three or four others while at the same time remaining part of a single, larger, connected conversation. Small, intimate conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into questions or issues that really matter in their life, work, or community.

www.theworldcafe.com