

Practices for Sense-Making and Field Building for Collective Intelligence

These practices support groups to learn to slow down, take the time to listen to each voice, and to cultivate the capacity to feel into the dynamics between members of the group. In a group context- the “field” is the felt sense within a group- this might be tension, excitement, distraction, harmony- or a mixture of these feelings as each individual contributes to the felt sense of the whole. Tending the shared “field” or felt sense of the group is important to creating the surface area for alignment and ease of engagement. These practices support productive dialogue- which in turn can support cooperative sensemaking and decision making.

Presencing

Taking a few moments or minutes to establish full presence at the beginning of a meeting allows for each member to connect to their own body or breath, arrive fully, and to "tune in" to themselves and the shared field of the group. In our often busy world, this moment to recenter is usually welcomed and allows for more effective conversations. This can be a simple or more elaborate practice that supports each person to be more grounded and ready to engage.

Spiral

This practice includes taking turns with a "round" of brief shares about a point of discussion to ensure circular listening and gathering of collective intelligence.

A team member brings an inquiry or topic to the group with basic facts, considerations, and potential impacts.

Each person in the circle takes a (brief) turn at offering insight, concerns, affirmations, etc. The idea is to move the conversation through the circle efficiently, giving each person a chance to be heard and share perspectives rather than any one person speaking at length.

A spiral usually includes several rounds where each person can have a few opportunities to share- building additional insights based on hearing other voices in the circle in order to have the "best thinking" from the group.

Resonance

This practice includes a member of the circle sharing the context of an initial idea, proposal, inquiry or point of discussion and then opening to a "round" of brief reflections from each member of the circle to ensure circular listening. This gives each person a chance to be heard and share perspectives. A spiral usually includes additional rounds to build off of each person's share until a

resonant decision can be arrived at. Usually if rounds need to go more than 3 times without a sense of shared resonance- it's an opportunity to acknowledge that something is not aligned and for a breakout conversation between the person bringing the idea and the person(s) who are not in resonance to continue to discuss further to see if they can find alignment or compromise. Letting a discussion turn into a breakout let's people have more spaciousness to explore and try to find common ground while allowing the energy of a meeting to continue to move forward while acknowledging that a point of discussion needs more time before it can be decided upon.

While there are specific resonance decision making practices, resonance can also be a light touch tool for getting a quick sense of whether people are feeling aligned in a discussion. After sharing some form of information to be considered, you can use the "agree", "neutral" or "not resonant" hand signals to gesture where a group stands on a concept or topic. This can then lead to more authentic discussions to find out where the group is out of resonance and open pathways to finding a path to mutuality.

See the "Resonance Decision Making" for more information and best practices.

Intentional Pause

This is a practice where anyone can call for a "pause" during a discussion to create space in a conversation if there is a sense of needing to slow down a conversation for a deeper "listening" or allowing space for other voices to contribute. This doesn't mean interrupting someone who is speaking, instead when the conversation has a natural point to interject, any group member can ask for the pause.

Simply pausing for a few moments can often help group members to connect to other intelligence centers besides the mind, integrating the conversation, and allowing for creativity or revelation. This can also allow voices that are sometimes slower to join the conversation a chance to bring their thoughts into the conversation.