

METHOD WHAT I NEED FROM YOU



Area of CoP Activity: Building Relationships
Learning and Developing Practice

CoP Lifecycle Phase: Inquire
Design
Prototype

CoP Success Factor: Community Interaction
Mutual Culture, Values, Belonging
Sharing Best Practice
Supporting Tools and Resources
Leadership

EIGE Step: Step 2: Analysing and assessing the state-of-play in the institution
Step 4: Implementing a GEP

Group Size: Unlimited number of groups; 3-7 people per group

Difficulty Level:

Time Needed:

Facilitator Preparation:

Participant Preparation:

Description: This activity aims to help people working in different contexts to get quickly better in asking each other for things, resources, help, etc. they need in order to be successful. It also helps to avoid misunderstandings and to overcome bias and prejudices that have been built up over time. This is being facilitated by making clear and tangible what group members need so that they can achieve common goals.

More Information: www.liberatingstructures.com/24-what-i-need-from-you-winfy

WHAT I NEED FROM YOU¹

Short description

This activity aims to help people working in different contexts to get quickly better in asking each other for things, resources, help, etc. they need in order to be successful. It also helps to avoid misunderstandings and to overcome bias and prejudices that have been built up over time. This is being facilitated by making clear and tangible what group members need so that they can achieve common goals.

When to use

This activity is helpful to clarify and identify the needs of every person involved in a project / activity. By identifying those needs efficiency is boosted and working successfully and productive toward an objective is being facilitated. So if the work in an organisation/ project lacks efficiency this activity could help by identifying, communicating and addressing the needs of people involved.

How to

A: Brief description

The participants communicate what they need from other people involved in their task, project, or organisation. The people involved get the chance to respond to that, which leads to more clarity and transparency.

B: Detailed step-by-step guide

- This activity begins by asking the participants what they need from co-workers or other people involved (they can be in other disciplines, departments, or functions). Everyone involved is invited to respond to those requests.
- The participants should be divided in 3 to 7 groups. The size of the groups has no limitation. In the middle of the room are chairs for 3-7 people to sit in a circle. Those 3-7 people take over the function of a spokesperson on behalf of each group. The needs and responses are recorded on paper. Each person is part of a group and everyone has the chance to participate.

Process of the activity:

- The activity starts by repeating the goal or challenge that is being addressed (this could be a specific task, the job in general etc.) in this session so that everyone understands the context in the same way. For example: What is it that the participating individuals need to fulfil a specific task, to solve a specific problem or to work efficiently in general?
- It is important to underline that requests must be explicit and clear, otherwise they might not get an unambiguous response. It is only allowed to respond to an expressed need with yes or no, I will try, and whatever (if the request isn't clear enough). The groups are being positioned within the room.
- One idea is that the groups begin with the 1-2-4-All activity to make a list of their main/biggest needs. Those needs should be expressed as requests. For example: "What I need from you [to successfully fulfil this task] is XYZ".
- Each group selects the two most important needs. A selected spokesperson represents the group. The spokespersons come together in the centre of the room and present the two selected needs to the other spokespersons. They take notes of the needs without giving responses yet.
- Each spokesperson writes down one of four responses to answer each request: yes, no, I will try or whatever (whatever is being selected if the request was not clear enough).
- Each of the spokesperson reiterates the requests that were made by addressing one spokesperson in the group at a time. The spokesperson will then share the respective responses (yes, no, I will try, whatever).

¹ Adapted from Liberating Structures, <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/24-what-i-need-from-you-winyf/>.

Additional ideas / information

- This activity can be followed up with the W3 activity
- Everyone should feel free to ask for what they truly need to be successful – so encourage everyone to do so!
- If the answer to a request is “whatever” this means that the request has not been communicated clear enough
- - important point to remind the participants.

This activity can also be used in virtual meetings. To be able to divide the group in subgroups the web-based application you're using should have a feature to do that like for example Zoom, Vispa, GoToMeeting, BigBlueButton, or Samepage. It could also be helpful to have a virtual whiteboard or a shared working document, so it would be good to choose an application that provides both or to combine two applications like Miro with Zoom for example. It is also important to communicate clearly how much time participants have for each step of the activity and it can be helpful to explain the activity beforehand to save time in the actual meeting.



REFERENCES

Liberating Structures – Innovation durch echte Zusammenarbeit. 2019. Available from: <https://www.liberatingstructures.de/>.