



# Annenberg Institute Critical Friends Consultancy Summary

## Process Overview

|            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
| 3 minutes  | Step One: Facilitator Overview              | a. Review process<br>b. Set time limits   |
| 5 minutes  | Step Two: Presenter Overview                | a. Share issue<br>b. Provide context<br>c. Frame key questions for specific consideration   |
| 5 minutes  | Step Three: Probing or Clarifying Questions | a. Group members ask more questions to learn about the issue<br>b. This is not a time to give advice or get into the discussion                       |
| 12 minutes | Step Four: Discussant's Group Discussion    | a. Group discusses issue (both warm and cool)<br>b. Presenter is silent, taking notes<br>c. Group addresses possible suggestions related to the issue |
| 5 minutes  | Step Five: Presenter Response               | Presenter responds to group feedback  |
| 5 minutes  | Step Six: Debriefing                        | Facilitator leads discussion, critiquing the process  |

## Group Member Roles

### Facilitator:

- Opens with process review for group
- Establishes time limits, watches time, adjusts as needed to stay within schedule
- Manages conversation so is inclusive of all in group; watches for those with something to say, makes opening for them
- Reminds discussants of roles, warm and cool feedback, and keeping on topic
- Leads debriefing process, not slipping back into discussion

### Presenter:

- Prepares an issue for discussion, clear about the specific questions to be addressed
- Does not participate in group discussion, sits listening outside of the group—does not maintain eye contact
- Takes notes and gauges what is helpful and what is not
- Later, is specific about the feedback that was helpful

### Discussants:

- Address only the issue brought by the presenter.
- Give feedback that is both warm positive and cool critical.
- Give feedback in a supportive tone.
- Provide practical suggestions.
- ◆ *“Warm” feedback consists of supportive, appreciative statements about the work presented*
- ◆ *“Cool” or more distanced feedback offers different ways to think about the work presented and/or raises questions; and*
- ◆ *“Hard” feedback challenges and extends the presenter’s thinking and/or raises concerns.*



## Preparing an Issue for Consultancy: A Guide for Presenters

Not sure if you have any issues to present...

- Ever wonder if you took the appropriate action?
- Challenged by a particular employee and not sure how to proceed?
- Looking for fresh ideas or a different approach to a challenging dilemma?
- Not sure how to follow-up with an issue that needs to be addressed?
- Have you recently been “stumped” by a situation?

These are precisely the issues that you could bring to the “Presenters” table through the Critical Friends Consultancy process.

### Framing the Issue

It is important to provide the discussants with enough information to discuss effectively and create solutions for the issue you are presenting. As you prepare your issue, consider including the following:

- Context in which the issue presents itself – does this situation come up in department meetings, or is this related to a philosophical disagreement in a particular discipline
- Important components surrounding the case – past history between the actors, or personnel structures that affect your ability to act
- If there is a meta issue looming behind the issue you present, it would be useful to share that with the discussants
- Your actions and/or reactions about the issue
- What you would like the group to discuss or the outcome you seek from the discussants – alternate suggestions, reinforcement for your actions, identify potential obstacles for you, etc.

### Preparing to Present

Consider bringing notes to the meeting at which you present. Remember that you only have five minutes to present your issue. Discussants do have five minutes to clarify but that is really time for them to get a better idea of the scenario. It is very important to let the group know what you want to get as a result from their discussion.

### Following Your Presentation

Listen carefully; take notes. Often the discussants will try to bring you back into the group, but it is more useful if you are able to distance yourself from the discussants so that you can capture all the information discussed. Hold yourself back from making judgments during the discussion as this might affect your ability to hear all the ideas and feedback.

### For the Presenter Response

This time portion is your opportunity to respond to the group discussion. This is not the time to continue the discussion with you involved. This is an opportunity for you to summarize your impressions of the discussion. Consider all the information gathered and identify which ideas might be useful and which ones you are unlikely to pursue.