



# CONSENT- DECISION MAKING METHOD

## STRUCTURE LAYER - DECISION MAKING

Consent is an agile , efficient decision-making method. It brings a different way of relating to the proposals which are in the center to be decided upon, highlighting the importance of collective intelligence .



### Aims and Objectives

Learn how to make decisions by consent.  
Understand the process and its principles:  
transparency, efficiency, equivalence.  
"Good enough for now, safe enough to try"  
This activity has the aim of teaching a method  
that the group can then adopt as a way of  
making decisions if the method and approach  
feels appropriate for the group.



### Time

Minimum 45 m - Maximum 90



### Materials Preparation

2 poster previously written, one with the consent  
stages, and another with the quality criteria of a  
proposal; papers , pens .



### Target audience

Groups and trainers



### Number of Participants

Minimum 7- maximum 20.



30'	FRAMING & INTRODUCTION
10'	TIME 1: CLARIFY
10-20'	TIME 2: OBJECTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS
10'	TIME 3 : PUBLISHING
10'	CLOSING ROUND

# INTRODUCTION

## FRAMING- 15 MINUTES

Presentation round,

This activity aims at teaching a method that the group can then adopt as a way of making decisions if the method and approach feel appropriate for the group.

Thus, in order to do the exercise, the group places in the center a real decision that they need to make. The facilitator asks the group for a decision that is on their agenda in order to take it as an example.

The facilitator can also bring proposals on topics close to the group with which he/she works.

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A PROPOSAL 15 MINUTES

The facilitator explains what is a proposal.

Good decision - making requires that proposals meet a few **quality criteria**:

- 1- The proposal fits within the domain or decision-making power of the group.
- 2- It clearly states the problem or issue to be solved; this description is supported by facts and observations.
- 3-It focuses on the causes, rather than the symptoms. The causes of the problem are described in the statement, and specify which needs are not being met.
- 4- It is supported by reasoned arguments: the arguments clarify how the proposal will support solving the problem or situation.
- 5- It is open, not presented as a request or an obligation, but rather as a proposal: alternative options may emerge or/and be added during the process.
- 6- Includes an action plan and an agenda. Wherever possible, it specifies a positive action plan with a time frame, where the objectives are realistic, achievable, verifiable, and where people can put their names beside each action.

The group presents a proposal to use in the process.

### CONSENT PROCESS:

Explanation of the three times and nine stages of the process.

It's now time to move on to experimenting with the method. If there is the need to divide the big group into smaller groups, this is the moment to do it!

## TIME 1: CLARIFY - 10 MINUTES

1- The proposal is introduced; a round of doubts or clarifying questions is opened in order to better understand the proposal.

2- A round of reactions is opened. Here the participants can give their opinion or their feelings about the proposal. Everyone expresses him/herself.

3- If in the reactions' round the majority of the group expresses many tensions, it is understood that the proposal cannot be submitted to consent and it needs extra work. It gets sent back to the presenter and for the moment the process cannot be continued. If this is not the case, then move on to the consent round.

## TIME 2: OBJECTIONS, IMPROVEMENTS 10 - 20 MINUTES

1- The first round of objections is now opened. In this round, all contributions are heard without discrimination, whether they are worries, concerns, etc ...

2- The proposal is improved as much as possible through what emerges from the group.

3- Second round of objections: here is the moment to bring the objections; all participants are warmly invited to ask themselves the question "Can I live with this proposal?". In this second round, an objection requires a reasoned argument that shows a risk for the group and/or the person if this decision is made. If the objection doesn't bring a reasoned argument of risk for the group, then it will not be accepted. The process then continues and the proposal is accepted with no objections from the whole group.



# CONSENT DECISION MAKING

## STRUCTURE LAYER - DECISION MAKING

### TIME 3: PUBLISHING - 10 MINUTES

- 1- Putting the proposal down in writing. The final wording is approved and verified.
- 2- The final wording is noted in the minutes.
- 3- Celebration !!!! , in whatever way the group chooses. Applause, sounds, etc ...

### CLOSING ROUND - 10 MINUTES

Debriefing in the plenary: How was it for you? Any important insight from someone?



### WHAT IS AN OBJECTION?: "GOOD ENOUGH FOR NOW, SAFE ENOUGH TO TRY"

The main question in consent decision-making is whether anyone has significant objections to a proposed decision. Giving consent means that there are no significant objections. It also means: 'I may not completely agree, but I also don't completely reject the proposed decision and I can still move on.' The group goes ahead with a decision.

At the same time, it ensures the possibility that anyone can *veto* a decision, just in case someone has important and argued objections. Then the proposed decision must be reconsidered and alternative solutions sought. If someone has significant objections, they are initially considered to reveal information about unintended consequences or about viable ways to improve decision-making.

Therefore, it is considered the responsibility of individuals to bring to the attention of the group possible objections to existing proposals, decisions, agreements, or activities. An objection can be a gift!



TIP: it is important that the facilitator knows the process well, and has experienced it in practice.

You can find more info here:  
<https://www.sociocracyforall.org/consent-decision-making/>

