



# Designing engagement

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*Talking Tweed*

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# What we'll address today

1. **Dialogue & deliberation:** two different forms of communication, both useful for public/stakeholder engagement
2. **Strategic work required** to design such engagement efforts

# What dialogue is not!

- A debate
- Talking 'at' people
- An exchange of monologues
- Rehearsed performances

# Dialogue with a capital 'D'

- **Involves flows of meaning:** people share their stories and seek to understand where others are coming from
- **Is collaborative:** everyone has something to contribute
- **Carries a strong ethic** of inclusiveness and mutual respect; we do not judge one another
- **Makes a difference:** because such conversations build understanding and relationships

# Dialogue – a definition

***... a deeply collaborative form of communication***

*in which participants feel safe to speak openly about their perspectives and experiences, and really work to hear and understand the perspectives and experiences of others present, even if they disagree or come from very different backgrounds.*

# How does dialogue 'make a difference'?

## 1. **It builds understanding**

- of different standpoints
- of complexity

## 2. **It builds relationships**

- trust across groups
- contacts + networks ('social capital' )
- capacity for future engagement + citizenship

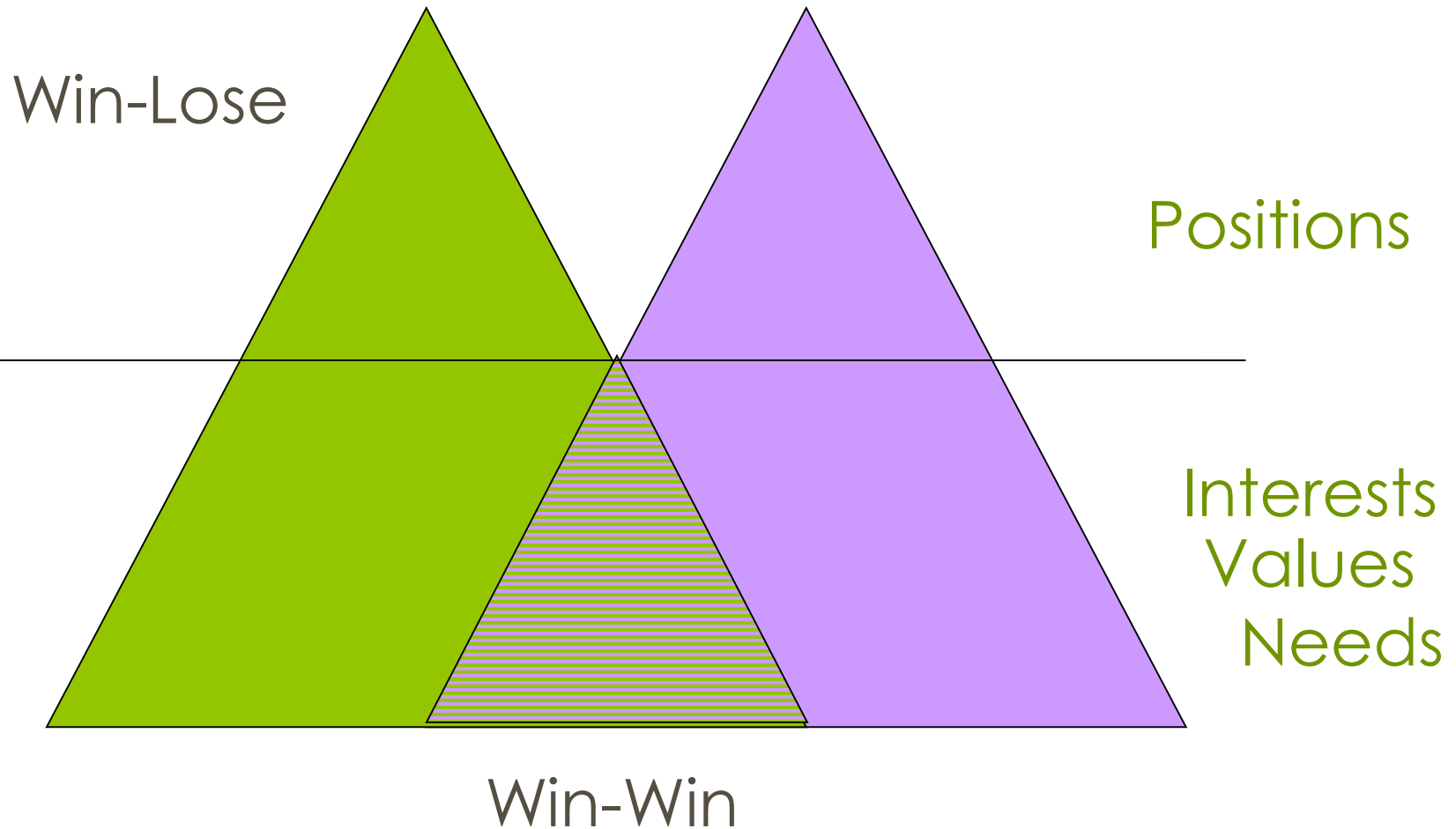
Note: *These are **defining goals** of dialogue*

Precisely because it builds  
understanding and relationships...

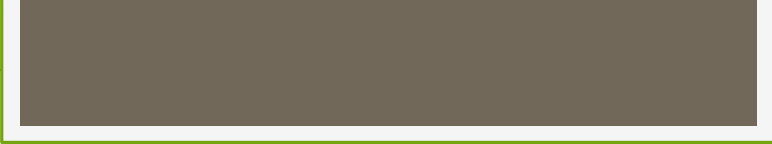
**Dialogue**  
**provides a strong foundation**  
for decision making and  
conflict resolution

HOW?

# 'PIN' diagramme







<b>Debate</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>	<b>Deliberation</b>
Seeks to promote opinions and gain majority support	Seeks to build understanding and relationships	Seeks common ground in order to solve problems
Participants argue, express, persuade and compete	Participants listen, exchange, reach across, and reflect	Participants frame and weigh options, and make choices
Outcome: win/lose	Outcome: no decision	Outcome: win/win

**Dialogue requires a shift in ‘group norms’,**  
through:

- 1. Guidelines or ‘ground rules’:** especially a non-judgemental ethos
- 2. Facilitation:** to nurture equality, inclusiveness and mutual respect

*If the process is good, the outcome will be good!*

# Sample: Guidelines for dialogue

- One voice at a time - *so we can hear one another.*
- Make your points concisely - *so everyone has a say.*
- Really listen – *to learn where others are coming from*
- Respect different views – *seek to understand one another, not impose your views*
- It's OK to be silent, but not to be silenced
- There's no such thing as a stupid question
- Avoid jargon – *or explain your terms*

# Principles of dialogue

- There is much we can learn from one another
- Everyone here has something to contribute
- Greater understanding can open new possibilities



Any questions or comments?

*(There's no such thing as a stupid question!)*

# Deliberation ...

**Seeks to come to a decision**, in the three stages:

- **Learning stage**: Participants together examine relevant evidence and views, and reflect on these.
- **Deliberative stage**: Participants consider different options, based on evidence and arguments. Communication shifts from exploration to persuasion.
- **Decision making stage**: Choices are made and agreed on. People's preferences tend to shift.

# Defining qualities of deliberation

- Information and evidence
- Evaluating alternatives
- Giving (and taking) public reasons
- Re-examining and (perhaps) changing preferences
- Seeking agreement or consensus
- Making informed and reasoned decisions



# Deliberative dialogue

Deliberation founded on the inclusive, respectful ethics of dialogue better taps the 'wisdom of the crowd', leading to more buy in and win-win outcomes.



## **DIALOGUE**

Inquiry dynamics

- Exploring and learning
- Co-producing shared meaning
- Building understanding and relationships

## **DELIBERATION**

Advocacy dynamics

- Exchanging public reasons
- Weighting alternatives
- Making decisions

The challenge is to facilitate communication dynamics that balance advocacy and inquiry





Any questions of clarification?

*(There's no such thing as a stupid question!)*

# Strategic thinking about engaging folk around adaptation

## Mapping exercise:

1. Who do we want to engage with?
2. What do we want from engaging them?
3. What will they want from engaging with us?  
What's 'in it' for them?
4. Where will they be coming from?

# Your task: strategic thinking

- Form 3 groups around the 3 projects
- Take 20 minutes to map these questions for your project
- You will build on this work to think through your design strategy this afternoon

# Note!

- Diverse partners – backgrounds, expertises, institutional drivers, etc
- Diverse motives for engaging – positions, interests, values, needs

# We need to 'think from the other'

- Find common language and common ground
- Find ways to move folk from where they are to where you and they want to be
- Be clear about your 'promise to your publics' – and honour it!



# Lunch!



# Designing an engagement process (1)

- **The process** may be a single event or a series of events or activities.
- **The design** must be 'fit for purpose', tailored to:
  - i. Your objectives
  - ii. Where your participants are coming from
  - iii. Available resources
- Developing your process plan requires **an iteration of strategic + practical considerations**

# Designing an engagement process (2)

- This is a staged task:
  - i) Understanding the situation
  - ii) Doing the necessary 'backstage' work
  - iii) Making strategic choices
  - iv) Doing the detailed design + planning
- Without due care in preparation, design and planning, you risk achieving little, wasting people's time and alienating folk.

# (i) Understanding the situation

(a)

- 1) Why: what are your objectives re outputs and outcomes?
  - Any conflicting agendas (collaborators, sponsors, participants)?
- 2) What do you need to understand about the context?
  - How is the topic seen by different groups?
  - What information will people need to participate effectively?

# Understanding the situation (b)

## 3) Who should participate?

- Who are our ‘publics’ and other stakeholders?
- What’s in it for them, and where are they coming from?
- Any potential obstacles to recruiting or engaging these groups meaningfully?

## 4) How: What are the practical constraints (feasibility)?

- Time frame, budget, other resources

## (ii) 'Backstage' work

... to make the frontstage happen

- 'Backstage work' may be needed, with your 'publics' +/- or collaborators
- *It is about the strategies, tactics and conversations that can secure buy-in, ongoing support and resources*
- Backstage work requires:
  - **Diplomatic skills:** relationship-building, mediation, negotiation of mutually beneficial options
  - **Political skills:** nudging, persuading, enthusing

# Key factors in successful collaboration

(Innes & Booher 2003, 2010)

- **Diversity of interests:** hence, multiple 'knowledges' and ways of seeing the world
- **Interdependence:** a sense that I cannot do what I need to do without you
- **Authentic dialogue + deliberation:** valuing reciprocity, relationships, learning, creativity; that the only force is that of the better argument.

## (iii) Making strategic choices

- o **Decide where collaboration is needed** (eg, to co-produce the process) and how to build this
- o **Frame the process:** Come up with a progression of conversations, activities, questions that take people from where they are to where they/you want to be.

*This is a key design task!*

## **(iv) Detailed design and planning**

### **Multi-stage process**

- Timeline: constraints + planning time
- Design: the progression of conversations, etc
- Number and nature of activities or events

### **Event or activity**

- Timing: what time of day and week, how long?
- Individual sessions: desired outcome + timing

### **Individual sessions**

- What question(s), grouping(s), technique(s)?



# Steps in a deliberative process

- Future visioning
- Gathering and pooling relevant knowledge(s)
- Building understanding
- Generating ideas for possible solutions
- Making choices
- Consensus building
- Action planning
- Evaluation

# Choosing techniques

- Choose the right technique for the group and purpose
  - Hearing all voices
  - Pooling knowledge, views, feelings
  - Building an agenda
  - Future visioning
  - Moving towards a decision
- Don't be technique-driven
  - Adapt available tools
  - Keep things simple but varied

# Practicalities for running events

- **Recruitment**
  - Don't delay!
  - What message(s) and methods?
- **Refining the event plan**
  - Iterative process
  - Get second eye(s) to review
- **Venue requirements**
  - Book in good time
  - Check suitability of room (layout, acoustics)
  - Access for setting up and clearing up
- **Materials needed**
  - Make a list in good time
  - Check everything works

# Your task: strategic design

- **Decide on any collaborations** that may be needed
- **Frame your process design:** a progression of conversations, activities or questions which will take your participants to where you want to end up.  
*Where will dialogue +/-or deliberation be needed?*
- If time, **come up with a broad plan** (tasks + timeline) for the process OR for (co)designing your process.
- **Record** your framing and plan, **plus your rationale**



**Let's review and reflect**

**Thank you and well done**