

# **BASIC FACILITATION**



**Missouri Department of  
Health and Senior Services**

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## CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

### Definition

Consensus is a decision making process where the group reaches a decision in which everyone involved in the meeting has provided input, understands, can support, and is willing to implement the decision. If agreement cannot be reached within the time allowed, a fallback decision-making option is used. (The fallback option must be clear at the outset of the meeting.)

### Objectives: After completing this module you will be able to:

- Define consensus
- Describe what consensus is and is not.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of consensus.

### What Consensus is:

- A process that gives all team members a chance to be heard.
- A process that allows individuals to discuss the pros and cons of several different options before selecting one.
- A process in which a team tries to find solutions to problems that meet the needs or concerns of all team members and are acceptable to all.
- A process that opts for commitment of the team members over the speed of decision-making.

### What Consensus is not:

- A time to focus on the merits of your solution to the exclusion of others.
- A process in which everyone must or even will be satisfied with the final decision.
- A process that relies on voting to reach a decision.
- A process that encourages competition among team members.
- A process for quickly reaching a decision.

### Guidelines for Consensus

- Allow time for all team members to voice their opinions.
- State your position clearly.
- Openly and actively listen to what others have to say. Suspend judgement.
- Do not avoid conflict. Use opposing views as a stimulus for further discussion. Restate the views of those with whom you disagree to make certain you heard them correctly.

- Work toward decisions that all team members are willing to accept and support. This may mean integrating various viewpoints into a creative solution or piloting an alternative.

**Exercise: Consensus Worksheet**

Break into groups, and using this worksheet list as many of the advantages and disadvantages of consensus decision making as you can. Discuss your results with the group.

**CONSENSUS WORKSHEET**

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>

## **Group Effectiveness**

There are several reasons to use consensus but, the major reason is that it increases group effectiveness. This is done in the following ways:

- It increases the quality of the team's products or decisions by ensuring that all members have heard and have considered views from all the team members.
- It increases the team members ability to work effectively in the future by seeking solutions that everyone supports rather than by creating winners and losers that result from voting and other decision making methods.
- It enables team members to meet their individual needs because it involves all members and addresses their interests.



## **CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING - OBJECTIVES**

- \*Objectives: After completing this module you will be able to:**
- \*Define Consensus**
- \*Describe what Consensus Is and Is Not**
- \*Discuss advantages and disadvantages of Consensus**

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## **Consensus Definition**

- \*Consensus is Decision Making where the Group reaches a Decision in which Everyone Involved Provides Input, Understands, Can Support and is Willing to Implement the Decision.**

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## **WHAT CONSENSUS IS**

- \*Process where All Team Members have a chance to be Heard**
- \*Process Allowing Colleagues to Discuss Pros & Cons of Several Options Before Selecting One**

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 **WHAT CONSENSUS IS**

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- \*Process where a Team Tries to Find Solutions to Problems that Meet the Needs of All Members and are Acceptable to All**
- \*Process that Opts for Commitment of the Team Over the Speed of Decision Making**

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 **WHAT CONSENSUS IS NOT**

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- \*A Time to Focus on the Merits of Your Solution to the Exclusion of Others**
- \*Process where Everyone Must or Even will be Satisfied with Final Decision**
- \*Process that Relies on Voting**
- \*Process that Encourages Competition**
- \*Process for Quickly Reaching a Decision**

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 **CONSENSUS GUIDELINES**

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- \*Allow Time for All Team Members to Voice Their Opinions**
- \*State Your Position Clearly**
- \*Actively Listen to Others-Suspend Judgment**

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## CONSENSUS GUIDELINES

**\*Do not Avoid Conflict-Use opposing Views to Stimulate Further Discussion-Restate views of those you disagree with to make Certain You Heard Them Correctly**

**\*Work Toward Decisions All Members are Willing to Accept & Support**

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## EXERCISE CONSENSUS WORKSHEET

**Break into groups and list as many advantages & disadvantages of consensus as you can. Discuss results with the group**

**Advantages**

**Disadvantages**

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## WHY USE CONSENSUS

**\*It Increases the Quality of Team products or Decisions by Ensuring that all are Heard**

**\*Team Member Individual Needs are Met Because All were Involved & Addresses their Interests**

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**WHY USE CONSENSUS**

**\*It Increases the Team Members Ability to work better in the Future by having all Support Decisions Instead of Creating Winners & Losers that Result from Voting and Other Decision Making Methods**

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