FACILITATORS MANUAL

the official reference on the use of the
Compatibility Communication System

CCS FUN- DAMENTALS

While the CCS is a tool that is easy to use, there are 5 fundamentals that we advise facilitators to follow to maximise the outcomes from CCS sessions.

For the facilitator, following these basic principles will ensure smooth, engaging and memorable sessions full of discussion and sharing. For the participant, the fundamentals ensure that using the CCS is enjoyable and easy to follow and regularly leads to experiences rich in self discovery, feelings and emotions.

These fundamentals are assumed knowledge in all CCS processes and CCS segments, so it is important that facilitators read this section before attempting a CCS session.

We identify 5 key fundamentals:

1. **tone** – what is the most appropriate tone for a CCS session and how can facilitators create and maintain it?

2. **framing the CCS** – what key phrases are considered vital when introducing participants to the CCS?

3. **preparing CCS topics** – what are the elements of an excellent CCS topic?

4. **CCS visualisation technique** – one of the most valuable ways to help participants to draw upon their tacit knowledge, particularly in group processes.

5. **eliciting responses** – what questions and directions will help to elicit and guide responses from participants?

fundamental 1: tone

The CCS has a well accepted capacity to promote dialogue, understanding and learning. It can be used to help people tap into deep emotional experiences to facilitate personal growth or to add enjoyment, inspiration and creativity to a corporate or social program. Whatever the purpose, it is good practice to aim to produce an environment with a tone that is:

» **safe and relaxed**
» **appropriately comfortable**
» **based on mutual respect and responsibility**
» **worthy.**

safe and relaxed

Participants should feel sufficiently relaxed so that they can generally enjoy the act of selecting images and talking about their choices, feelings and emotions.

Facilitators can achieve this by:

» being relaxed, open and friendly from the outset

» showing enthusiasm and curiosity for participants' choices

» affirming participants' choices and promoting support from other participants

» ensuring that you use the standard framing phrases (see *fundamental 2*)

» doing the same activity yourself and sharing with the group as an example.

appropriately comfortable

The CCS is an excellent tool for actively encouraging people to go beyond their habitual comfort zone. Before calling upon this capacity however, it is vital that facilitators first create a safe, relaxed, appropriately comfortable environment. Participants must feel comfortable to share their thoughts without fear of ridicule or judgement.

Facilitators can achieve this by:

» having participants share their choices in pairs or small groups before addressing the whole group.

» recognising that a participant who is having difficulty responding or appears bemused may need a little more time or the chance to hear others first – so move on to another participant and then return to them a little later.

» never judging a participant's CCS choice, or interpretation or association. For example if a participant sees the CCS 'handshake' card as 'a bird' then it is important not to make them feel they have made the wrong choice – it's what they say

"THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EMOTION AND REASON IS THAT EMOTION LEADS TO ACTION WHILE REASON LEADS TO CONCLUSIONS."

that is important, not whether they are right or wrong. In short, respect and accept their choices.

» recognising that a participant may at times guard their disclosure by responding in a flippant or dismissive manner. A facilitator may need to 'come back' to this participant later in the session and ask them to expand upon their choice. Or, at times it may be better to take an opportune moment aside with the participant, one-on-one, to help them to begin opening up and sharing more deeply.

mutual respect and responsibility

All opinions are respected, everyone has the right to differ, and both participant and facilitator are responsible for the outcomes of the session.

Facilitators can achieve this by:

» respecting and valuing all responses and differences (for instance: when recording responses on a flip chart all choices should be recorded – not simply those that seem appropriate).

» appreciating that at times people are opening up to such an extent that they are allowing access to personal thoughts and feelings that they may otherwise have normally kept to themselves. It is important to show and encourage respect and even gratitude for this disclosure.

» supporting self understanding and discovery – at times the self-disclosure that the CCS brings about will lead participants to genuine moments of self discovery and understanding. It is good practice for facilitators to be ready to support these moments and to give the participant the time they need to process their discovery – keep participants feeling safe.

» redirecting – "did anyone else have something like this, but perhaps with a different CCS image?"

» involving everyone – purposely seeking to gather responses from the whole group while ensuring individual safety and dignity.

worthy

Participants feel that the CCS selection activity that they are doing is worthwhile, that the outcome will be worth the effort.

Facilitators can achieve this by:

» always presenting the CCS with enthusiasm, confidence and correct framing (see *fundamental 2*)

» choosing to use the CCS with purpose or not at all – never simply offer the CCS to a group as a tool that they "may find useful" or "might work for them". Plan the use of the tool and confidently stand by that plan.

» asking excellent CCS topics (see *fundamental 3*) – a well planned topic will almost always be perceived as worthy of attention

» if necessary, asking participants to trust the process and assuring them of a worthy outcome.

fundamental 2: framing the CCS

When introducing the CCS and presenting topics for participants to consider, it is vital that each participant have their own vision pack and that the tool is appropriately framed. As such we strongly recommend facilitators use the following language and phrases in their sessions.

when introducing the CCS ...

"Everyone has the same pack of cards containing a specially selected set of photographs, illustrations and words. Any card can mean anything to anyone at any time – there are no set meanings for the images. So feel free to pick images that best represent [the topic] for you."

when presenting a topic ...

"Go through your pack and find 5 cards that, for you, describe the experience of ..."

"Go through your pack and find some cards that show what _____means to you."

"Thumb through your pack and find some cards that, for you, describe your thoughts and feelings about ..."

"Shuffle through your pack to find cards that you believe best represent ..."

Note that the participant is not being instructed to first spend time thinking of a response and then to go and find images to represent these thoughts. Participants are purposely being guided to file through the pack and find images while they think about the topic. The difference is subtle but improves the likelihood that a participant will be able to uncover and access their tacit knowledge. As such we recommend that CCS topics be delivered in this way (with the notable exception of the *CCS visualisation technique – see fundamental 4*).

when asking people to share their choices with another ...

"Sometimes we don't know what we think until we hear what we say – so turn to your partner and share why you chose what you chose. After sharing you will be in a better position to contribute your ideas to the whole group."

worth repeating ...

The participant is not being instructed to first spend time thinking of a response and then to go and find images to represent these thoughts. Participants are purposely being guided to file through the pack and find images while they think about the topic. The difference is subtle but we believe it genuinely improves the likelihood that a participant will be able to uncover and access their tacit knowledge.

3

fundamental 3: preparing CCS topics

The most important components of any CCS session are the CCS topics. While the process of preparing CCS topics is not difficult, attention to certain details will ensure consistently deeper, clearer, enjoyable and more timely communication from participants.

It is good practice for facilitators to ask themselves the following questions when preparing CCS topics:

» what are the outcomes I want for the whole session?

» what are the outcomes the session participants might be expecting?

» how well do the participants know each other?

» what life and work experiences are the participants likely to have that they can draw upon?

» how will the group utilise the information that individuals raise using the CCS?

» how many topics do I need and what is the timing?

» how will I structure my session to move from the individual outwards to the group? And from the group back to the individual?

elements of an excellent CCS topic

For best results make sure a CCS topic:

an excellent CCS topic:

*"Go through your pack and find 3 cards **that for you** describe the **experience** of being led in this organisation."*

- is clear and simple
- is an open and general question (see people do not argue with their own data)
- has no right and no wrong answer – it is subjective
- addresses the individual eg "... that you believe" or "that for you ..."
- is worded to reveal feelings, emotions and elements of experience
- has been prepared and written out in full (and perhaps even tested on a friend or colleague)
- is delivered with confidence.

people do not argue with their own data

Sometimes the best topic is often much more general than one might think.

As a CCS facilitator, aim to create situations that make it easy for

people to feel that they are free to respond any way they please. This enables and empowers participants to raise their own data about a topic – and people tend not to argue with their own data. Furthermore, once they raise an idea and communicate it to their colleagues, participants are usually more committed to what they have stated publicly.

The topics that are most effective are wide ranging and general. Such topics open the mind and result in responses that people feel compelled to speak about. So, when auditioning a topic to use in a session, be sure to consider whether it is too directive or could the task be more general.

Consider the following case:

A manager came to us suggesting she was having a problem with staff not being prompt and polite with clients and wanted to run a CCS session to address the issue. Keen to get to the point, she proposed to use the following topic:

"Select 5 cards to describe what you believe are the problems of not being prompt or polite with our clients."

Now, while this clearly raises the issue, it is clearly too directive and 'telegraphs' the purpose of the session. A more general and more effective approach would be something like:

"select 5 cards that for you, best describe the elements of an excellent client experience*."

We indicated to the manager that while this topic will have a variety of responses, the responses will almost definitely include reference to the timeliness and politeness of service. All she would need to do at this point is to draw out all the responses and then shift the focus to the cards that relate to her area of concern.

* This kind of situation is also an excellent opportunity to make use of the *CCS visualisation technique* (see below) – in this case with a focus such as "a memorable service experience" the participants have had.

It takes courage to use a general topic. It requires facilitators to think on their feet and work with the myriad of possible responses, in an effort to lead the group towards the intended session outcomes. However the reward is usually one of increased openness, participation and commitment from participants.

using templates

For some topics participants can be asked to select a collection of CCS cards in which each card represents a particular aspect of the topic, eg: "... 1 card for family, 1 card for a great weekend, 1 card for a dream .."

In these instances it is good practice to provide a card template to help participants organise their selection and subsequent sharing. Sticker templates – templates designed to take a number of CCS vision stickers with space for annotations – are an excellent way to help participants record their choices and responses for later review and discussion.

As such, card and sticker templates are commonly provided in the following processes and segments and are available for download from the CCS website.

family

a great weekend

a dream

4

fundamental 4: CCS visualisation technique

One of the best ways to help participants draw upon their concrete experience and then use the key elements of this experience to learn and improve, is the CCS visualisation technique. The technique is an essential component of the CCS group process and a reliable addition to many CCS sessions. It differs from the standard CCS topic technique in that participants are asked to put down their vision pack, close their eyes and visualise an experience before thumbing through their cards. The following step by step plan illustrates the technique:

Have your participants take everything out of their hands (including their CCS vision pack) sit back, close their eyes and relax.

1. 'Take participants back' to a time when they can remember experiencing the topic you are working on.

2. While their eyes are closed, ask participants a series of 'overhead' questions to bring the experience to life in their minds – such as:

   » What language are people using? How do they speak with one another? What are they saying?

   » What is the feeling in the situation?

   » How do you feel in this experience?

   » What are the outcomes of the experience?

   » What is the environment around you like? (colour, light, sounds).

3. Pause in silence for a few moments to give participants a chance to visualise themselves in the experience.

4. Now, ask participants to open their eyes with the words:

   "Okay, open your eyes. Go through your pack and find 5 cards that for you describe the elements of your experience."

5. Give participants the time they need to make their selections and have them share their choices with a partner before discussing ideas around the room.

example

Here is a script example of the visualisation technique used in a customer service training session led by a store manager with her employees.

"OK, place your cards on the table in front of you and close your eyes.

Now, think of a time when you had what you believe was an excellent, perhaps even, 'ideal' customer service experience. It could be a shopping trip, a restaurant, garage, library, a bus trip, museum visit, whatever – just think of a specific incident. Think about how you felt in that moment. What was said to you? What language was used and when? What was good about the experience? How did you feel at

the end of the encounter? What are you doing during the experience? What are others doing? What were the outcomes from this excellent experience?"

[silence for a few moments]

Now, open your eyes. Go through your vision pack and find 5 cards that for you describe the elements of that ideal customer service experience – the elements that led you to call it an excellent experience. It's not so much the story of the experience that is important – it's what were the elements of that excellent service experience?

fundamental 5: eliciting responses

The purpose of using the CCS is to help people uncover and talk about their thoughts and ideas on a subject. The strength of the tool is such that often a participant will do this spontaneously and even fervently. From time to time however, facilitators may need to use one or more of the following open questions or directions to help educe, guide and elicit responses:

- what else does that mean to you?
- what does that mean for you?
- what are some other words that come to mind when you look at that image?
- what about that card made you think of that?
- what other reactions did you have to that card?
- what other cards did you choose?
- if you could think of something about that card, what would it be?

Occasionally a participant is troubled because they cannot find any images that represent what they want to say. This is almost always because they are looking for a particular object or noun that is not in the vision pack. In this case we have found it best to acknowledge the

absence of the image and then to ask the participant a second question that focuses their thinking upon the feelings and experience of the object. This will usually kick-start their thinking and elicits a fuller response. The following example should illustrate the approach:

P: "This doesn't work, there's nothing for music"

F: "Oh, what were you looking for?"

P: "I was looking for a picture of a violin"

F: "What would a picture of a violin represent for you?"

P: "I wanted to say how important music is in my life"

F: "OK, try this. Go through your pack again and see if you can find some cards that, for you, show how music makes you feel, cards that describe your experience of music and what makes it important."

it's inspirational and has the power to unite us in a cause or belief

music is relaxing, it sets mood

music crosses boundaries, it can welcome and join

there's music in nature, I feel it, I can hear it

P: "I wanted to say how important music is in my life"

F: "OK, try this. Go through your pack again and see if you can find some cards that, for you, show how music makes you feel, cards that describe your experience of music and what makes it important."

can be purely entertaining, it can cheer me up

... and on and on!

ceremony and action

TO CCS OR NOT TO CCS?

Despite its versatility, the CCS is not appropriate for all types of personal and corporate development situations. It is a tool designed to help participants draw upon their lived experiences, it is not about finding right and wrong answers or for delivering information of a technical nature.

As such the CCS should only be used in those sessions or parts of a session where there genuinely is no right answer - in otherwords when a facilitator is not simply trying to encourage participants to say a particular thing or arrive at an exact way of doing something.

Consider this real example:

WE WERE ASKED ...

How would I use the CCS to teach nurses about the 5 steps of sterilisation?

Are the steps the same for everyone? **YES.**

Are there variations, better ways, other ways that are acceptable? **NOT REALLY.**

OK - this is not a job for the CCS.

HOWEVER WE WENT ON TO ASK ...

Do all nurses always follow these procedures? **NO, THAT'S WHY WE TEACH IT - IT IS VITAL THAT THEY DO.**

OK - use the CCS to draw out each participant's own ideal about what it takes to be an excellent nurse. In almost every case this will include some reference to following necessary procedures. Then simply redirect to a key procedure of sterilisation. In this way, each participant is motivated to remain consistent to their own ideal – they will want to follow procedures.

> THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY UNDER HIGH HEAVEN TO GET ANYBODY TO DO ANYTHING. DID YOU EVER STOP TO THINK ABOUT THAT? YES, JUST ONE WAY. AND THAT IS BY MAKING THE OTHER PERSON WANT TO DO IT.
>
> [DALE CARNEGIE]