

Shared Voice, Shared Responsibility: Worker Participation as a Psychological Safety Strategy

CSSHSA
COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES HEALTH & SAFETY ASSOCIATION

Welcome

Leadership begins the moment you stop trying to impress and start trying to ***connect***.

– **Simon Sinek,** author and speaker on leadership



My journey



- Filipino immigrant who resides in the traditional unceded territories of the sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), and sel̓íl̓witulh (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples
- **My perspective** is guided by the Two-eyed Seeing Approach (introduced by **Elder Dr. Albert Marshall of the Mi'kmaq Nation**) which I continue to learn through my Indigenous Learning Journey
- **My experience:** Community support worker, Life skills worker, resident support worker, housing support worker, social navigator
- **My education:** Psychology, project management

Before We Begin

What do you need to participate fully in today's session?

- Is there anything that would help you engage comfortably?
- Do you have any accessibility needs you'd like us to be aware of?
- Is there anything I can do to support your participation?

Our Path Together



Grounding & Connection	Exploring Worker Participation	Learning From Indigenous Ways of Knowing	Making Space for Perspectives	Shared Voice, Influence, & Decision-Making	Practicing Together

Participant Handout

- Reflection Prompts
- Activities
- Space for Notes
- Links to Additional Resources

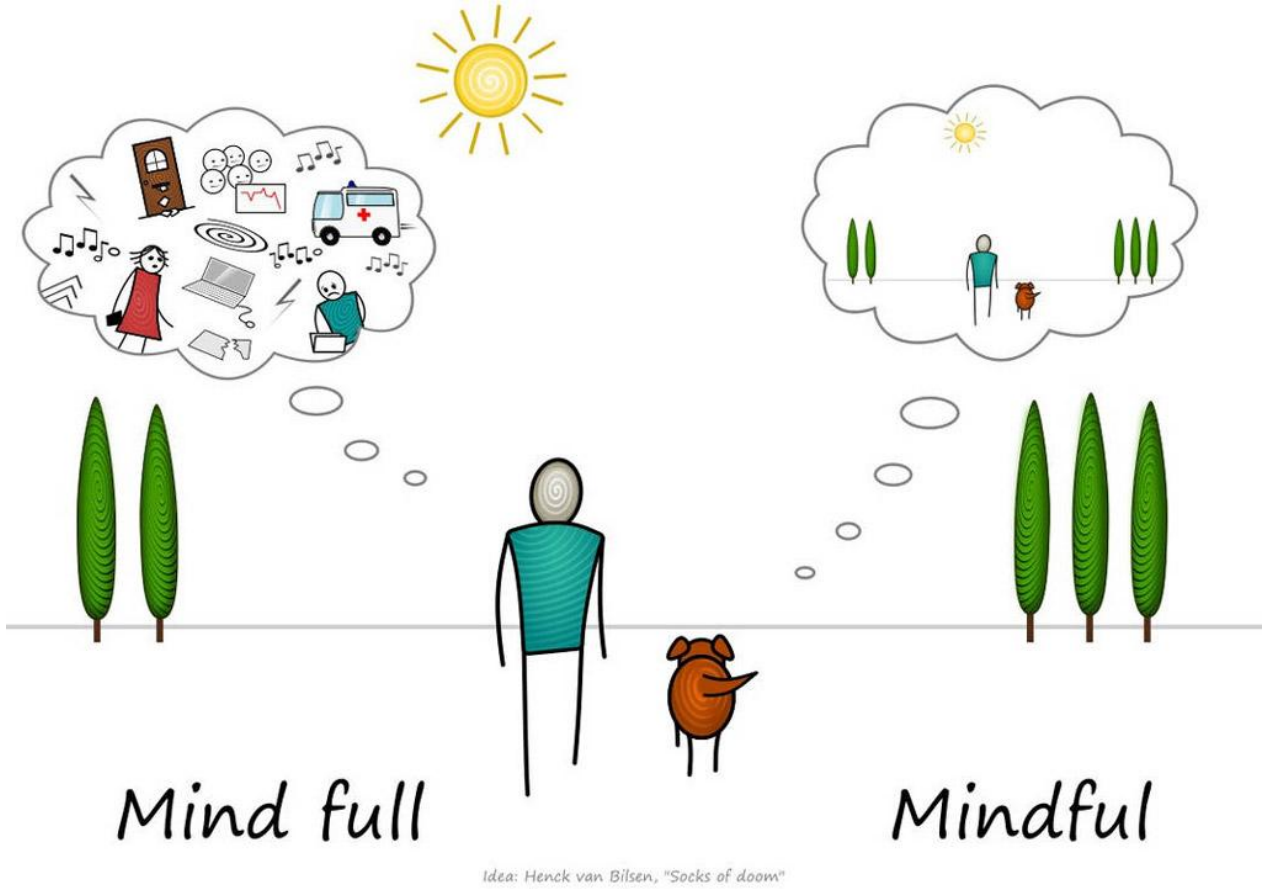


Grounding to Meaningfully Connect

Being in the Present Moment to Foster Connection

"The most precious gift we can offer others is our **presence.** When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers."

– Thích Nhất Hạnh



Arrive & Set Your Intention

Pausing and resetting creates a buffer between tasks and improves ability to stay present and process information[1]

- **Cognitive reset:** In your handout, write down your final thoughts from where you left off before joining me today.
- **Physical reset:** Stand up and do 5 shoulder rolls.
- **Sensory reset:** Listen to a specific transitional sound together.
- **Intention-setting:** In your handout, write down what you're hoping to gain from our time together.



Connect With Your Table

In your tables, introduce yourself and share:

- Name
- Roles including outside of work (e.g., parent, sibling, friend, pet parent)
- Share what you notice after taking a few minutes to transition

8 minutes



Exploring Worker Participation

What is worker participation?



The active involvement of employees in the decision-making process, encouraging them to contribute to share responsibility for outcomes.



CSA Standard for Psychological Health and Safety: Active, meaningful, and effective participation is a key factor in psychological health



WorkSafeBC's Psychological health and safety: A framework for success: Employees are included in discussions, decisions, and initiatives about workplace factors that affect their mental well-being



CSA OHS Management Systems: Involving workers in establishing, operating, evaluating, and improving health and safety programs.

Why worker participation?

Worker participation has been studied for more than a century, dating back to the 1920s.[2]



Better communication



Culturally responsive decisions



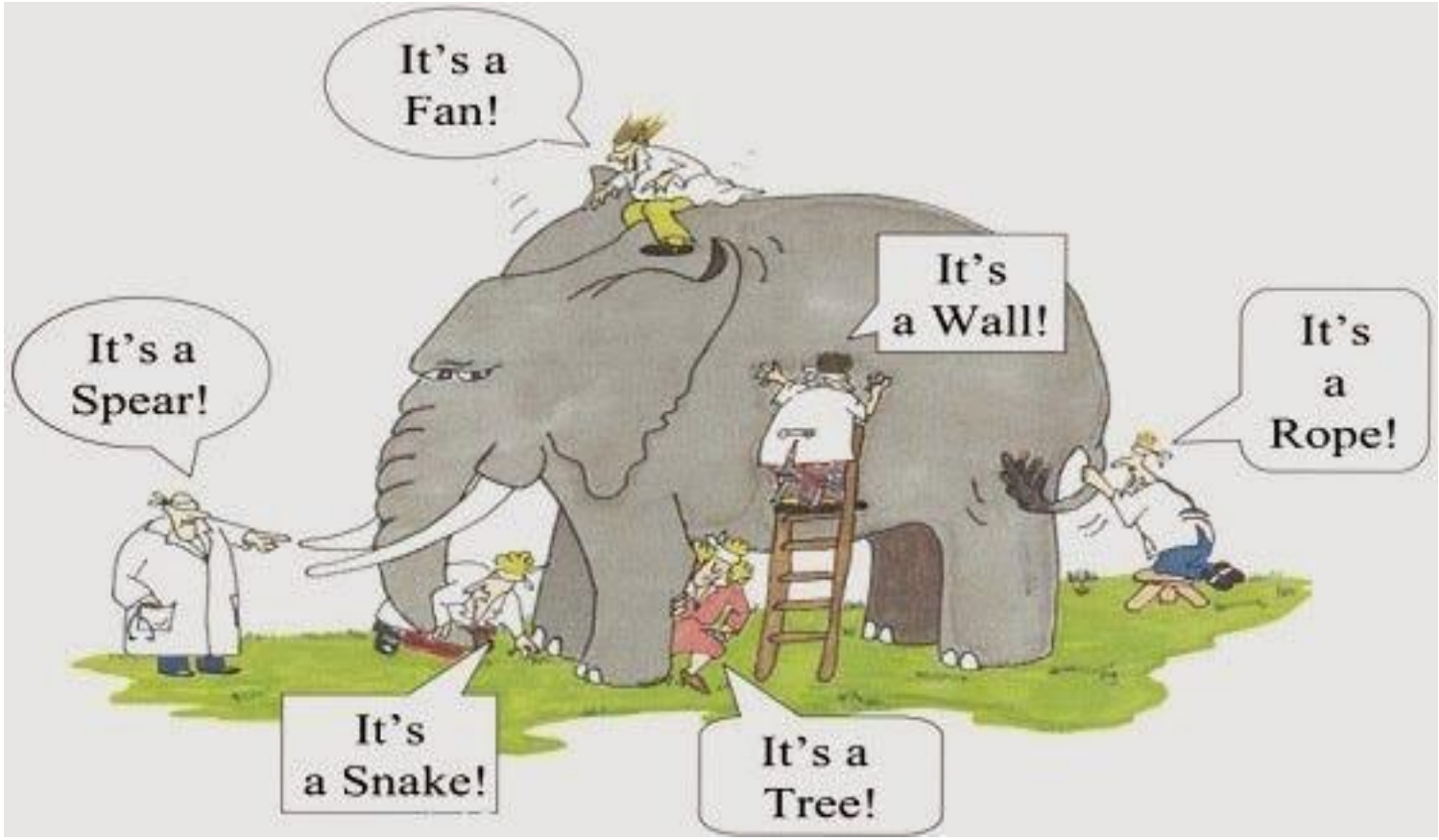
Stronger commitment



Greater job satisfaction & motivation

Workers have a **right to participate** in workplace health and safety activities.

Whose perspectives do we need to see the whole picture?



When Worker Participation Was Missed

A building manager in supportive housing redesigned an empty unit into a housing-based overdose prevention site. The decision was intended to increase access to harm reduction services for residents, **but staff were not involved before the decision was made.**

What was missed?



New responsibilities for staff



Increased workload



Operational considerations



Questions about implementation & compensation

When Worker Participation Was Considered

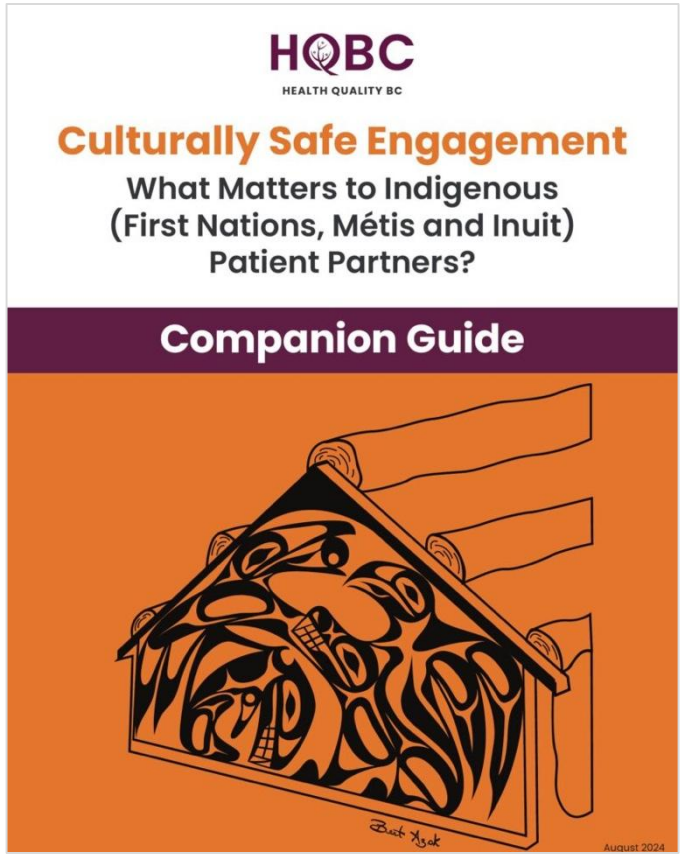
A patio at a drop-in centre was identified as a potential safety concern because it created blind spots that made it difficult for staff to monitor the area. **Staff were invited to share their perspectives on how the patio could be addressed.**



What might staff bring to this decision?

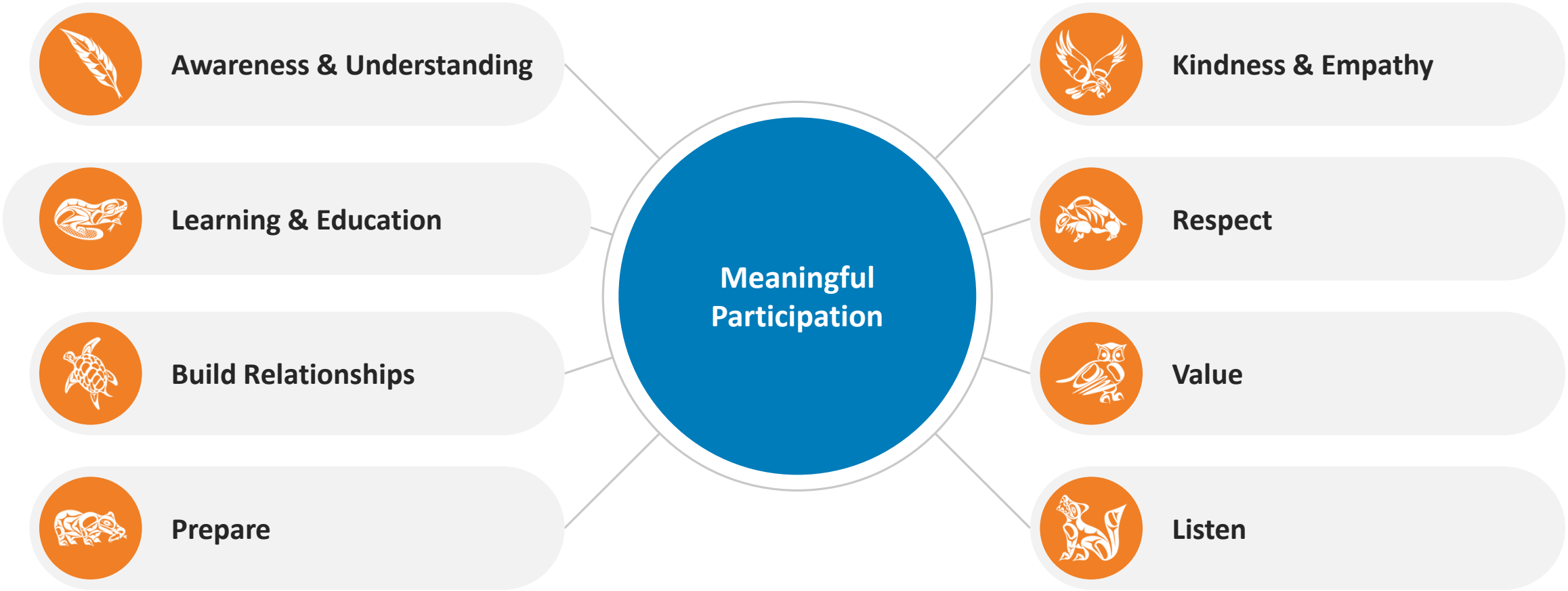
Learning From Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Health Quality BC's (HQBC) Culturally Safe Engagement Principles[3]



- Learned through my Indigenous Learning Journey
- Grounded in the voices and experiences of Indigenous patient partners
- An invitation to reflect on what supports meaningful participation

Health Quality BC's (HQBC) Culturally Safe Engagement Principles[3]



Reflection Activity

Choose one principle that resonates with you. What might applying it look like in how you lead?

3 minutes



Awareness & Understanding



Learning & Education



Build Relationships



Prepare



Kindness & Empathy



Respect



Value



Listen

Learn From One Another

Share the principle you chose and one way you are applying or might apply it.

6 minutes



Awareness & Understanding



Learning & Education



Build Relationships



Prepare



Kindness & Empathy



Respect



Value



Listen

Making Space for Perspectives

When is it important to consider other perspectives?



It depends on task, environment, and unique dynamics of your team

Vroom-Yetton-Jago Model[4]:
A decision-making framework that helps leaders determine how much participation a decision requires.

Considers:

1. Decision quality
2. Employee commitment
3. Time constraints

Vroom-Yetton-Jago Decision Model's Five Decision Procedures



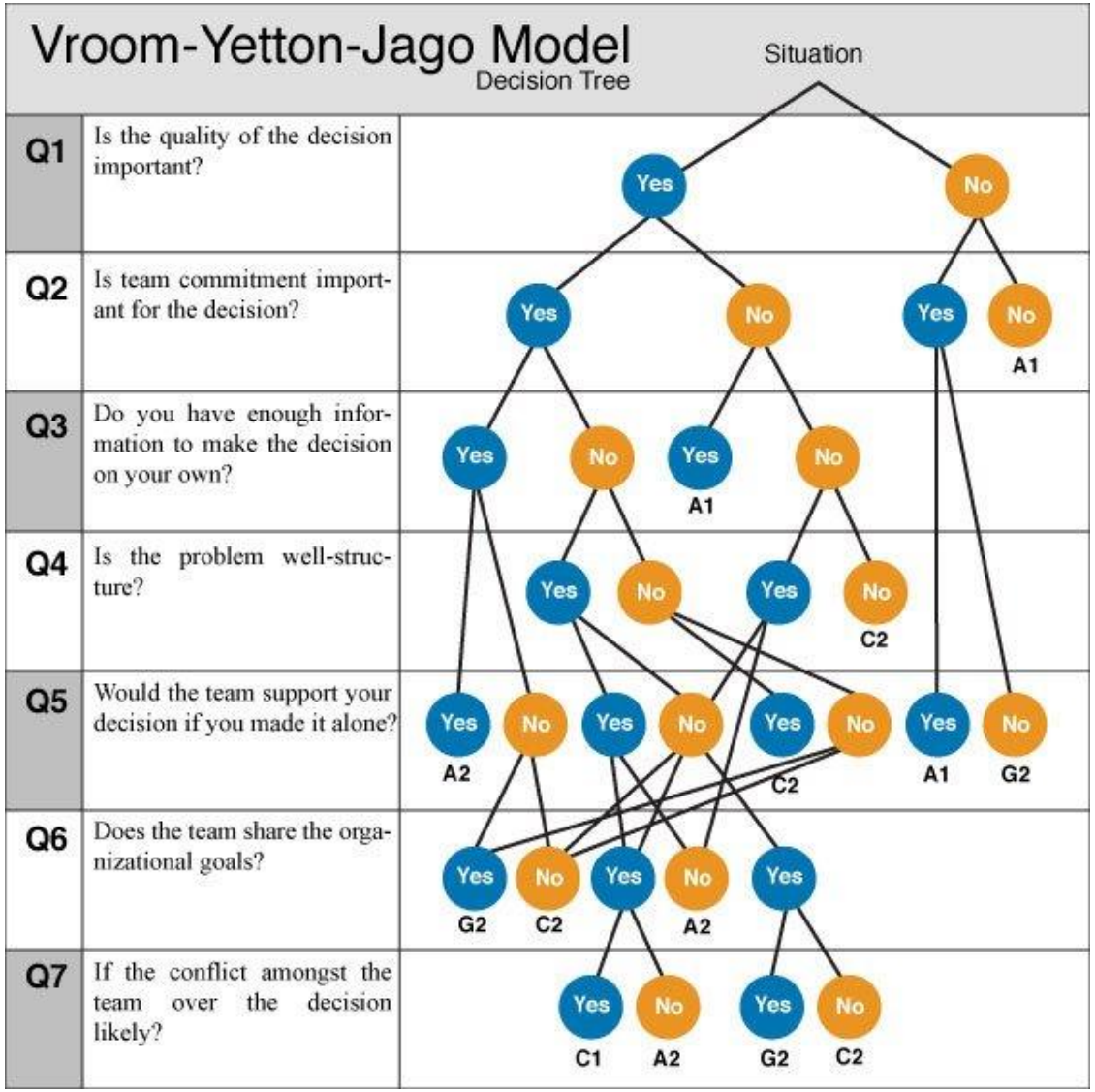
Autocratic I	Autocratic II	Consultative I	Consultative II	Collaborative
No consultation	Leader gathers information, analyzes it, and proceeds to decide	Leader asks input from each individual staff and makes final decision	Leader shares problem to entire group, brainstorms suggestions with group, and makes final decision.	Group decides with leader facilitating conversation.

Increasing Participation →

How does the model determine which approach?

The questions explore:

1. Problem Diagnosis & Information Needs
2. Commitment & Acceptance
3. Conflict & Consensus



Let’s Test the Model

Scenario: You have reviewed several benefits and initiatives to support employee well-being and are now deciding which would be most appropriate for your organization.

- Is the quality of the decision important?
- Is team commitment important for the decision?
- Do you have enough information to make your own decision?
- Is the problem well-structured?
- Would the team support your decision if you made it alone?
- Does the team share the organizational goals?
- Is conflict amongst the team over the decision likely?

Scan the QR code to use the Vroom-Yetton-Jago Decision Model for the scenario.

1 minute

Explore the Decision Model Together

Share with your group:

- What did the Vroom-Yetton-Jago Model tell you?
- What factors influenced your result?

8 minutes



Shared Voice, Influence, & Decision-Making

Decisions Sit Within a Larger System



Different People See Different Parts of the System



Frontline Workers
See how policies and decisions play out in practice

People with Lived Experience
See how services are experienced and where barriers emerge

Leaders & Managers
See organizational priorities, resources, risks, and constraints

Before Deciding: Whose Perspective Do You Need?



KNOWLEDGE:

Who has relevant knowledge and experience?

IMPACT:

Who is directly impacted?

INCLUSION:

Whose perspectives might be missing?

Map the Perspectives Together

Situation: You are deciding which employee well-being initiative would be most appropriate for your organization.

With your group, consider:

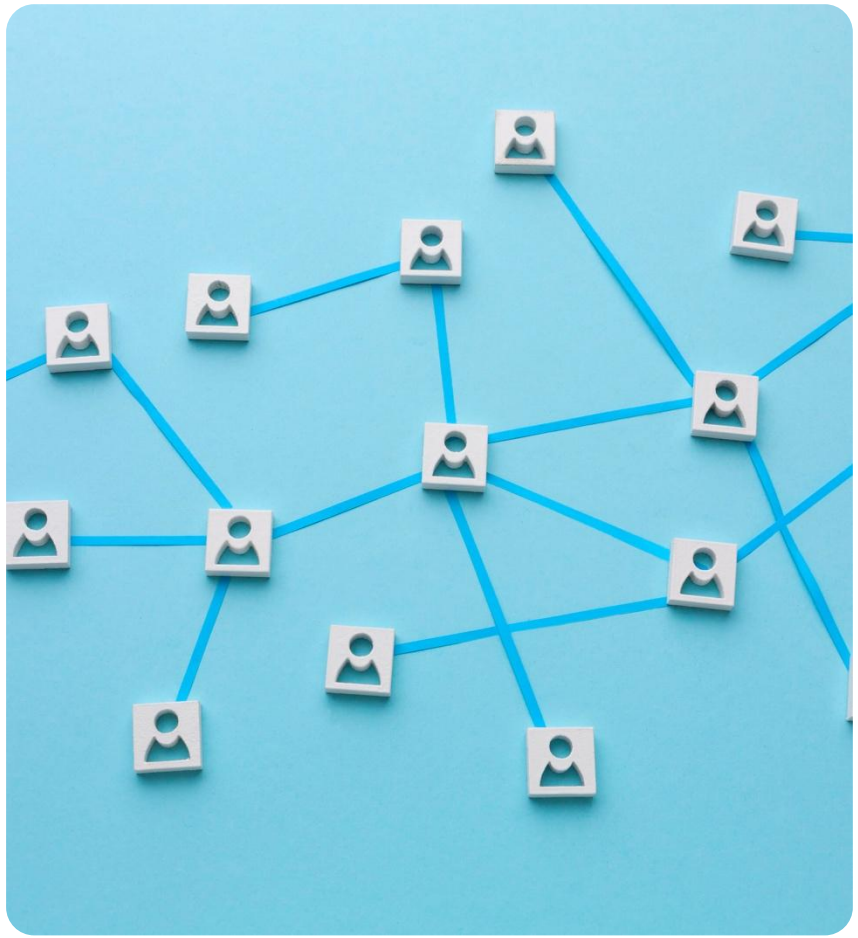
IMPACT: Who is directly impacted by the decision, including who will have to implement it?

KNOWLEDGE: Who has relevant knowledge or experience?

INCLUSION: Whose perspectives might be missing?

8 minutes

Identify perspectives, not individuals.



Communication is Key

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY starts with **SHARED UNDERSTANDING.**

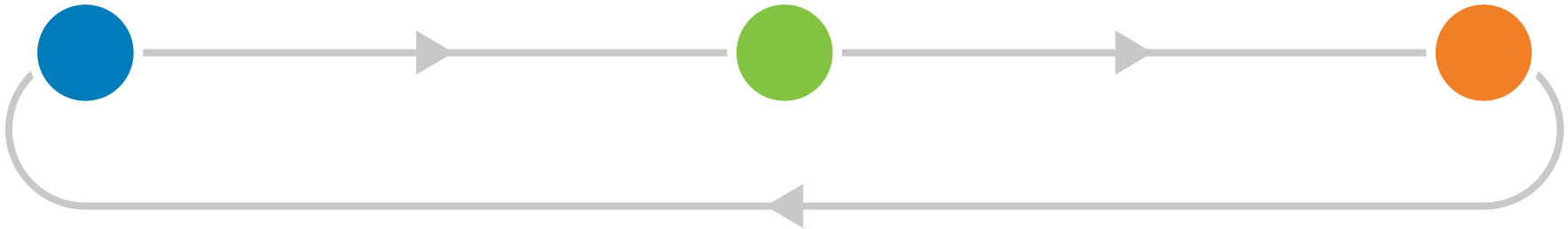
Not everyone affected by a decision is involved in making it.

Everyone impacted by the decision deserves timely, appropriate communication.

COMMUNICATE TRANSPARENTLY:

- What is happening
- How the decision is made
- What it means for those affected

Where do we hold space for worker participation?



Identify points of connection

Notice opportunities for input.

Create a culture of participation

by encouraging one another and workers to seek and share perspectives.

Close the loop

where feedback is happening informally or formally.

Participation doesn't have to be another task.

Existing Spaces for Participation

- Team huddles
- Staff meetings
- 1:1s
- Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee (JOHSC) meetings
- Debriefs
- Informal conversations



Practicing Together

From Understanding to Practice

Meaningful worker participation requires us to:

Pause

What biases or assumptions am I bringing or am I approaching this with an “I know best” mindset?

Learn

What perspectives and experiences do I need to understand before making a decision?

Plan

How do I include these perspectives in my decision? Who needs to be involved? How much involvement is appropriate? When and where can they participate?

Communicate

What is the purpose of gathering input? How will the input be used? What can actually be influenced?

Connect

How do I create space for meaningful dialogue? How do I create conditions for people to speak openly?

From Framework to Practice

Scenario: You have reviewed several benefits and initiatives to support employee well-being and are now deciding which would be most appropriate for your organization.

In your handout, identify:

Pause	One assumption that might get in the way.
Learn	One perspective you need to understand.
Plan	One opportunity for participation
Communicate	One thing you would communicate clearly
Connect	One way you would create space for honest input



Shared Voice, Shared Responsibility

When the best leader's work is done, the people say,
"We did it ourselves!" – Lao Tzu

Making space for different perspectives enables decisions to be shared and fosters psychological safety.

Listening to others' knowledge and experience shows valuing others.

Sharing responsibility for decisions shapes the work.

When everyone has meaningful opportunities to contribute, we strengthen psychological safety.



Comments or Questions?



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CSSHSA wishes to thank all our partners for the continued support as we engage with the sector to develop this important work.

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