

Decision-Making System (Approved 6/9/2017)
Co-created by the TCCP (Trainer Candidate Community Path)

Purpose: Provide the TCCP community with a robust and easily usable system for making decisions, to contribute to connection, ease, equivalence and effectiveness.

Review Date: 6/9/2018

Measurement Criteria:

1. How many decisions have been made using this system?
2. Have any decisions been made using methods other than those defined in this system?
3. Has this system contributed to connection, ease, equivalence and effectiveness in making decisions?

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1. Resources

Additional resources are available in the [Decision Making Resources](#) Google Drive Folder. Please use these to supplement this document.

- Circle Meeting Process Guide
- Sociocratic Circle Meeting Facilitator's Handbook
- E-mail Selection Process guide

2. Principles

- A. **Domain:** An area of responsibility for making decisions. Domains for TCCP decision making are defined in the [TCCP Governance System](#).
- B. **Consent:** Consent is defined as the absence of any *paramount* and *reasoned objection* to a proposal. We can also think of the state of consent as being "willing to live with" a proposal individually and collectively.



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- C. **Objection:** An objection is ultimately an expression of an individual's belief that the proposal does not align with the values of the community. It is *paramount* when it takes a member of the community out of their Community Range of Tolerance; it is *reasoned* when it clearly articulates the specific aspect of the proposal that is paramount.
- D. **Range of Tolerance:** My Personal Range of Tolerance includes anything I am willing to live with or try; i.e. anything to which I do not object. My Community Range of Tolerance is what I am willing to live with or try in a community context. It is *informed but not defined* by my Personal Range of Tolerance.
- E. **Receiving an Objection:** We do our best to receive each objection as a gift which becomes the community's dilemma. The Dutch word translated as objection is *bezwaar*; the literal translation is "a twist in the belly" or "a heavy heart." If the member offering the objection is not able to clearly articulate the reasoning, we offer empathic presence and inquiry to help develop clarity.
- F. **Resolving an Objection:** Once we have clarity about the reason for the objection, including any related needs, we try to creatively find other strategies to meet these needs. Once we have found these strategies, the objection is resolved. We are going for "good enough for now and safe enough to try." When we strive for a decision that is "perfect and lasts forever" we slow down the process.
- G. **Dynamic Steering:** Once we make a decision, we assess its effectiveness in implementation and review it after a defined period of time. Any decision may be reviewed at any time, as new information arises.
- H. **Flexibility:** Other forms of decision-making may be used in situations where those members involved in the decision consent to using a different approach.

3. Types of Decisions

- A *Real-Time Decision* is made using one of the processes defined in [Section 4](#) of this document. The process occurs during a meeting in real time during an in-person gathering, a virtual meeting, or a combination of the two.
 - When a proposal is presented for a Real-Time Decision process, whether live or virtual, the circle or person presenting the proposal will do their best to send a draft proposal to the community by e-mail no later than seven days before the meeting where the decision is to be made.
 - During this time, any member may offer feedback and request changes or additions to the proposal. This feedback is presented and considered during the real-time meeting.
- An *E-Mail Decision* is made using e-mail and follows one of the adaptations listed in [Section 5](#) of this document. To invite broad and considered participation, the

process shall allow at least seven days between initial proposal distribution and the beginning of the consent period.

4. Defined Processes

The following sections define the processes for Real-Time Decisions, whether in person or virtual. See [Section 5](#) for process adaptations for E-Mail Decisions.

- Advice Process: individual action with limited impact.
- Rapid Decision: existing proposal with low impact, complexity or risk.
- Selection: selecting people to roles and positions by consent.
- Short Format: existing proposal with higher level of impact, complexity or risk.
- Long Format: question or dilemma without an existing proposal.

A. Advice Process (Individual action with limited impact)

- Proposer determines who in the community may be impacted by the proposed action, as well as those who may have expertise, knowledge or experience related to the proposed action.
- Proposer checks with these people and asks for feedback and objections to the proposed action.
- The decision is approved when all objections are resolved.
- At any time, If anyone in the process believes the impact, complexity or risk is high enough to warrant broader participation, the proposal is brought to the whole community using the Short Format.

B. Rapid Decision (Existing proposal with low impact, complexity or risk)

- Proposer or facilitator presents proposal and asks if anyone present objects.
- If one or more participants offer an objection, the group seeks an amended proposal that integrates the needs expressed in the objection.
- The decision is complete when all objections are resolved.

C. Short Format (Existing proposal with higher level of impact, complexity or risk)

- **Present Proposal:** The proposer or facilitator briefly presents the proposal and its underlying needs. The proposal may be verbal or written.
- **Clarifying Round:** Participants ask clarifying questions for the purpose of understanding what is being proposed.
- **Response Round:** Participants provide a quick response (“gut reaction”) to the proposal and name any aspect they would like to see added, changed or removed.
- **Amend Proposal:** Either during the Response Round or once all responses are collected, the proposal is amended to incorporate the responses.

- **Consent Round:** After presenting the amended proposal, the facilitator asks each participant in turn if they have an objection. Each objection is noted, and when all objections are collected the group receives them as dilemmas and works together to creatively resolve them.
- **Celebration:** Once all objections are resolved, the decision is complete and we celebrate!

D. Long Format (Question or dilemma without an existing proposal)

- **Present Topic:** The facilitator briefly presents the question, dilemma or topic for decision as clearly and concisely as possible.
- **Picture Forming:** Using rounds, the facilitator invites each participant to name the needs that are relevant to the decision to be made. “What needs will be met by this decision?” “What are the criteria for an effective decision?”
- **Proposal Shaping:** Once the picture forming is complete (implicit or explicit consent), the facilitator starts a round of collecting specific strategies / proposal ideas to satisfy the needs / criteria defined in Picture Forming.
- **Bridging and Tuning the Proposal:** Once all proposal shaping ideas are recorded, the group tunes the proposal. Possible strategies for this step include:
 - a. Categorize the proposal ideas.
 - b. Bridge and reconcile contradictory proposal ideas.
 - c. Delegate this task to a smaller group.
- **Final Proposal:** Once the final proposal is completed, check that it addresses all of the needs / criteria from the picture forming phase.
- **Consent Round:** The facilitator presents the final proposal and then asks each participant in turn if they have an objection. Each objection is noted, and when all objections are collected the group receives them as dilemmas and works together to creatively resolve them.
- **Celebration:** Once all objections are resolved, the decision is complete and we celebrate!

E. Selection (Selecting people to roles and positions)

- **Review/Consent to Position Description (PD):** The facilitator reviews the PD and checks for changes or objections. The PD includes the following sections:
 - a. Requirements: what the person in the role is expected to do.
 - b. Qualifications: the knowledge, skills and abilities the person brings to the role.
 - c. Term: how long the person will be in the role; e.g. a length of time or a number of meetings.

- d. **Measurement:** the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the decision; how effectively the person held the role.
- **Nomination Round:** Each participant writes their name and the name of the person they are nominating on a piece of paper and hands it to the facilitator. You may nominate yourself, someone else or pass. Remember we are looking for someone whose qualifications match the requirements “well enough” for the defined term. This is not a life appointment.
 - **Say Why Round:** The facilitator reads the nominations in turn and asks each person to say why they nominated the person they did. Share your reasons, also known as *arguments*, in relation to the Responsibilities and Qualifications of the role or position.
 - **Change Round:** Once all nominations and arguments are recorded, the change round offers an opportunity for each participant to either change their nomination or keep it the same. If changing, state the arguments / reasons behind your change.
 - **Candidate Proposal:** The facilitator proposes the nominee who, in their opinion, has the strongest arguments related to Responsibilities and Qualifications. This person is now proposed as the Candidate for the role.
 - **Consent Round:** The facilitator asks each participant in turn if they have an objection to the Proposed Candidate. The Candidate is asked for their objection last. Each objection is noted, and when all objections are collected the group receives them as dilemmas and works together to creatively resolve them.
 - **Celebration:** Once all objections are resolved, the decision is complete and we celebrate!

5. Process Adaptations for E-mail Decisions

A. Advice Process (Individual action with limited impact)

- Only adaptation is that communication is by e-mail and not in person.

B. Rapid Decision (Existing proposal with low impact, complexity or risk)

- Only adaptation is that communication is by e-mail and not in person.

C. Short Format (Existing proposal with higher level of impact, complexity or risk)

- **Present Proposal:** The proposer sends the written proposal via e-mail as an attachment or link to an online document.
- **Clarifying Round:** Participants respond with clarifying questions for the purpose of understanding what is being proposed. Time limited.

- **Response Round:** Participants respond with a quick response (“gut reaction”) to the proposal and name any aspect they would like to see added, changed or removed. Time limited and may be combined with the Clarifying Round.
- **Amend Proposal:** Once all responses from the Clarifying and Response Rounds are collected, the responses are incorporated and the final proposal is sent back out for consent.
- **Consent Round:** Participants are invited to share objections to the final proposal. Time limited. If there are objections, the process facilitator or proposer designs a method for resolving them. This could be a Zoom call, e-mail exchange or other strategy.
- **Celebration:** Once all objections are resolved, we celebrate, either through e-mail or on a Zoom or phone conference.

D. Long Format (Question or dilemma without an existing proposal)

- This process is best suited to making decisions in real time. No adaptations for e-mail are offered.

E. Selection (Selecting people to roles and positions)

- This is much more involved as an e-mail process.
- See the [E-mail Selection Process folder](#) for a detailed example of how to do this.



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