

# Do Now

- ✓ Think of someone you go to for advice, support or resources (professional or personal)
- ✓ On a sticky note, jot down some qualities that person may possess (the reasons you chose that person)
  
- ✓ Pair and Share

# Isolation



Passengers

# Critical Friends: Refining Reflective Practice through a Consultancy Process

*Attendance Success Initiative*

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# Objectives

- ✓ Participants will:
  - Be able to articulate the purpose of engaging in collaborative reflective practice.
  - Receive and provide feedback on a professional dilemma you are currently dealing with.
  - Employ a consultancy process.

# Agenda

1. Purpose and Overview of Consultancy Process
2. Application: Rounds 1-2
3. Debrief
4. Close

# Purpose of Session

- ✓ Leadership is lonely...
  - We often work as independent units.
  - Structured discussion encourages reflective practice.
- ✓ Solidify collegial relationships within the cohort
- ✓ Sustainability
  - You will carry this work forward through the systems you establish.

# Why Critical Friends?

- ✓ First, what is a critical friend?
  - Encouraging, supportive colleague
  - Committed to providing honest and often candid feedback – feedback that may be uncomfortable or difficult to hear.
  - Critical in the context of this process is intended to mean “important” or “key” or “necessary.”
- ✓ In bringing critical friends together, there is an opportunity to both solicit and provide feedback in a manner that promotes reflective learning.

# Why Critical Friends?

- ✓ The Critical Friends consultancy process provides an opportunity to:
  - provide and receive constructive feedback,
  - rethink leadership,
  - leads to concrete action, and
  - models a process that can be used with teachers, principals, administrators and other leaders in your district.



# Jolly Transition



# Group Agreements

## Norms

- ✓ We agree to speak truthfully, but constructively, about weaknesses, problems, and emotionally charged issues.
- ✓ We agree to honor confidentiality within our consultancy groups.

# Introducing Critical Friends

- ✓ (3 minutes) To get to know your Critical Friends:
  - Quickly share your name, current position and years of experience.
  - Calculate combined years of experience for your table.
- ✓ (2 minutes) Share out – total years of experience

# Why Critical Friends?

- ✓ Process utilizes time limits, roles, and agreed-upon purpose and norms
- ✓ Goal:
  - Reduce interruptions in discussion
  - Reduce “rush-to-comment” approach our busy lives seem to promote

# How: Warm/Cool/Hard Feedback

## ✓ *Warm:*

- Supportive, appreciative statements about the work presented

## ✓ *Cool:*

- More distanced feedback, offering different ways to think about the work; raises questions

## ✓ *Hard:*

- Challenges and extends the presenter's thinking; raises concerns

# Group Member Roles

- ✓ Facilitator
- ✓ Presenter
- ✓ Discussants

# Facilitator

- ✓ Reviews process, even if everyone is familiar with it
- ✓ Sets and keeps group to time limits (slight flexibility)
- ✓ Participates in discussion but is on the lookout for others who wish to participate
- ✓ Reminds discussants of roles, warm/cool/hard feedback

# Presenter

- ✓ Prepares and presents issue for consultancy
- ✓ Shares issue, provides context, and is clear about specific questions/issues to be addressed
- ✓ Does NOT participate in discussion; instead sits outside group and does not maintain eye contact
- ✓ During discussion, keeps notes and gauges what is helpful or not



# Discussants

- ✓ Address issue brought forth by the presenter
- ✓ Give warm/cool/hard feedback
  - The feedback should be given in a supportive tone and should provide practical suggestions

# Consultancy Process – Basic Format

- ✓ Step 1: Facilitator Overview (3 minutes\*)
- ✓ Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 4: Discussant's Group Discussion (10 minutes)
- ✓ Step 5: Presenter Response (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 6: Debriefing (4 minutes\*)

## Step 1: Facilitator Overview (3 min\*)

- ✓ Review process
- ✓ Sets and keeps to time limits (slightly flexible)

## Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 min)

- ✓ Share issue or dilemma you are currently facing
- ✓ Provide context
- ✓ Frame key questions for consideration or expectations for outcome of discussion

## Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 min)

- ✓ Group members ask more questions to learn about the issue
- ✓ Reminder, this is not the time to give advice or get into the discussion

## Step 4: Discussants' Group Discussion (10 min)

- ✓ Group discusses issue (warm, cool, and hard feedback)
- ✓ Presenter is silent and does not maintain eye contact (taking notes)
- ✓ Group addresses possible suggestions related to issue

## Step 5: Presenter Response (4 min)

- ✓ Presenter responds to group feedback
- ✓ Presenter shares what feedback was helpful
- ✓ Presenter identifies key next steps

## Step 6: Debriefing (4 min\*)

- ✓ Facilitator leads discussion, critiquing the process



# Agenda

- ~~1. Purpose and Overview of Consultancy Process~~
- 2. Application: Rounds 1-2**
3. Debrief
4. Close

# Dilemma

- ✓ (5 minutes) Identify an area in which you are seeking fresh ideas or a different approach.
  - An issue with which you are struggling — anything related to your work.
  - The dilemma should not be one that you are well on your way to figuring out yourself.
  - The dilemma should not be one that involves only getting other people to change.
  - The dilemma should be something that is within your locus of control.

# Dilemma Presentation Organizer

## Dilemma Presentation - Graphic Organizer

Context in which the issue presents itself	
Important components surrounding the situation – important actors, past history, personnel structures that affect your ability to act	
Your actions/reactions around the issue	
What you would like the group to discuss or the outcome you seek from the discussants – e.g. alternate suggestions for a desired outcome or critical actions; identify potential obstacles; refine progress indicators; etc.	
Focus question: specific and thoughtful – What do you REALLY want to know? What is your real dilemma?	

# Round 1 Consultancy



# ROUND 1

## Step 1: Facilitator Overview (3 min)

- ✓ Review process
- ✓ Sets and keeps to time limits (slightly flexible)

# Round 1 – Step 2

- ✓ Step 1: Facilitator Overview (3 minutes\*)
- ✓ Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 4: Discussant's Group Discussion (10 minutes)
- ✓ Step 5: Presenter Response (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 6: Debriefing (4 minutes\*)

## Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 min)

- ✓ Share issue or dilemma you are currently facing
- ✓ Provide context
- ✓ Frame key questions for consideration or expectations for outcome of discussion

# Round 1 – Step 3

- ✓ Step 1: Facilitator Overview (3 minutes\*)
- ✓ Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 4: Discussant's Group Discussion (10 minutes)
- ✓ Step 5: Presenter Response (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 6: Debriefing (4 minutes\*)



## Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 min)

- ✓ Group members ask more questions to learn about the issue
- ✓ Reminder, this is not the time to give advice or get into the discussion

# Round 1 – Step 4

- ✓ Step 1: Facilitator Overview (3 minutes\*)
- ✓ Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 4: Discussant's Group Discussion (10 minutes)
- ✓ Step 5: Presenter Response (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 6: Debriefing (4 minutes\*)

## Step 4: Discussants' Group Discussion (10 min)

- ✓ Group discusses issue (warm, cool, and hard feedback)
- ✓ Presenter is silent and does not maintain eye contact (taking notes)
- ✓ Group addresses possible suggestions related to issue

# Round 1 – Step 5

- ✓ Step 1: Facilitator Overview (3 minutes\*)
- ✓ Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 4: Discussant's Group Discussion (10 minutes)
- ✓ Step 5: Presenter Response (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 6: Debriefing (4 minutes\*)

## Step 5: Presenter Response (4 min)

- ✓ Presenter responds to group feedback
- ✓ Presenter shares what feedback was helpful
- ✓ Presenter identifies key next steps

# Round 1 – Step 6

- ✓ Step 1: Facilitator Overview (3 minutes\*)
- ✓ Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 4: Discussant's Group Discussion (10 minutes)
- ✓ Step 5: Presenter Response (4 minutes)
- ✓ Step 6: Debriefing (4 minutes\*)

## Step 6: Debrief (4 min)

- ✓ How did that feel? What did we learn?
- ✓ What can we as a group improve on in the next round?

# Round 2 Consultancy





## Step 1: Facilitator Overview- (3 min)

- ✓ Reviews process
- ✓ Sets time limits

## Step 2: Presenter Overview (4 min)

- ✓ Share issue or dilemma you are currently facing
- ✓ Provide context
- ✓ Frame key questions for consideration or expectations for outcome of discussion

## Step 3: Probing or Clarifying Questions (4 min)

- ✓ Group members ask more questions to learn about the issue
- ✓ Reminder, this is not the time to give advice or get into the discussion

## Step 4: Discussants' Group Discussion (10 min)

- ✓ Group discusses issue (warm, cool, and hard feedback)
- ✓ Presenter is silent and does not maintain eye contact (taking notes)
- ✓ Group addresses possible suggestions related to issue

## Step 5: Presenter Response (4 min)

- ✓ Presenter responds to group feedback
- ✓ Presenter shares what feedback was helpful
- ✓ Presenter identifies key next steps

## Step 6: Debrief (4 min)

- ✓ What was effective about this consultancy process?
- ✓ What was challenging?
- ✓ What are you taking away?

# Agenda

- ~~1. Purpose and Overview of Consultancy Process~~
- ~~2. Application: Rounds 1-2~~
- ~~3. Debrief~~
- 4. Close**

# Closing Reflection

- ✓ As a result of the feedback you received, how has your thinking changed related to the dilemma you presented? How might your thinking be changed in approaching future dilemmas?
- ✓ How might you leverage the Critical Friends Consultancy Process to improve reflective practice at your school or district?



# Critical Feedback Fosters Growth



[Man on Fire](#)

[Man on Fire 2](#)

# Priority Schools Bureau Contact Information

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# References

- ✓ References:
- ✓ Appleby, J. (1998). *Becoming Critical Friends: Reflections of an NSRF Coach*. Providence, RI: The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.
- ✓ Cushman, K. (May, 1998). *How Friends Can Be Critical as Schools Make Essential Changes*. Oxon Hill, MD: Coalition of Essential Schools.
- ✓ Bambino, D. (March, 2002). *Redesigning Professional Development: Critical Friends*. *Educational Leadership*, 59 (6), pp. 25-27.