

## **Decision-Making Exercise**

Created by Carlos Teuscher

Review the active listening reading from your last class.<sup>1</sup> As we discussed, groups can interact and make decisions in a multitude of ways. Structures can help the group maintain focus, provide safety, and increase levels of objectivity in the group. These structures can vary based on each organization and their needs, but some common frameworks that our clients use to make decisions are:

1. Robert's Rules of Order
2. Roberta's Rules of Order
3. Sociocracy
4. Integrative Consent
5. Holacracy

Pick two decision-making frameworks (can be from above or others) and put together a summary, which includes, but is not limited to, key differences, advantages, and disadvantages of each framework. Summaries should be no longer than 2 pages and sent to Professor Teuscher by 9am Tuesday, April 4.

Be prepared to (a) present your summaries to the class and (b) facilitate discussions in class based on the frameworks you researched.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., Chapter 9, Part IV of Introduction to Transactional Lawyering Practice 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (West 2022), by Alicia Alvarez and Paul R. Tremblay.

(Teacher's Guide to Class Exercises post-Facilitation Assignment)

1. (5 min) Students should present their research on a decision-making framework to other students in the class. The students should focus only on the process so students understand the rules for the framework.
2. (15 min) As a class, make a decision using the framework just described.
  - a. The group should designate one "leader/facilitator" (ideally a student that researched the framework and will be neutral or omni-partial in the discussion).
  - b. The group should decide what decision constitutes a vote – e.g., majority, 2/3, other threshold.
  - c. Some options for "decisions" include:
    - i. Whether students will (1) meditate or (2) have a dance party in the school atrium for the first 10 minutes of class.
    - ii. Whether (1) class will be held outside next week (regardless of rain, snow, or sleet) or (2) students will introduce themselves to 5 new people at the Clinic alumni reception [or similar event] next week.
  - d. As with any decision-making, the students may decide to delay their decision (e.g., until the weather is more certain for (ii)(1) above), or elect to choose an option that is not presented (e.g., something in between (1) and (2)).
3. (20 min) Reflection on advantages/disadvantages of the decision-making framework. Key themes include:
  - a. Does the framework invite dialogue?
  - b. Are there any communication agreements that might need to be in place to supplement the decision-making framework?

Some additional debrief questions may include:

- What are your general reactions to have participated in this decision?
- What shifts, if any, did you experience in your decision?
- In what ways did the structure and process impact you?
- How do you imagine your peers might respond to the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process? In what ways might they struggle?
- In what ways could the facilitator encourage mutual understanding and improved communication?
  - o Stimulate engagement
    - Think-write-speak, cue people (on deck), gathering of ideas
  - o Encourage intentional speaking and choice
  - o Interrupt/prevent problematic patterns
  - o Foster a sense of safety and forward movement

4. Repeat with next decision-making framework.