

PARTICIPATORY GROUPS

CONVENTIONAL GROUPS

Everyone participates, not just the vocal few.	The fastest thinkers and most articulate speakers get more air time.
People give each other room to think and get their thoughts all the way out.	People interrupt each other on a regular basis.
Opposing viewpoints are allowed to co-exist in the room.	Differences of opinion are treated as conflict that must either be stifled or "solved."
People draw each other out with supportive questions. 'Is this what you mean?'	Questions are often perceived as challenges, as if the person being questioned has done something wrong.
Each member makes the effort to pay attention to the person speaking.	Unless the speaker captivates their attention, people space out, doodle or check the clock.
People are able to listen to each other's ideas because they know their own ideas will also be heard.	People have difficulty listening to each other's ideas because they're busy rehearsing what they want to say.
Each member speaks up on matters of controversy. Everyone knows where everyone stands.	Some members remain quiet on controversial matters. No one really knows where everyone stands.
Members can accurately represent each others points of view– even when they don't agree with them.	People rarely give accurate representations of the opinions and reasoning of those whose opinions are at odds with their own.
People refrain from talking behind each other's backs.	Because they don't feel permission to be direct during the meeting, people talk behind each other's backs outside the meeting.
Even in the face of opposition from the person-in-charge, people are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs.	People with discordant, minority perspectives are commonly discouraged from speaking out.
A problem is not considered solved until everyone who will be affected by the solution understands the reasoning.	A problem is considered solved as soon as the fastest thinkers have reached an answer. Everyone else is then expected to "get on board" regardless of whether s/he understands the logic of the decision.
When people make an agreement, it is assumed that the decision still reflects a wide range of perspectives.	When people make an agreement, it is assumed that they are all thinking the exact same thing.