

# Facilitating for Success in Difficult Situations

By

Mark J. Platten

CSU Extension Director, Teller County



Colorado State University  
Extension



# Introduction

1. Discuss the three intervention modalities used in moving through difficult situations
2. Deciding whether a situation is “ripe” for facilitation and using the deliberative process.
3. Tools for success once a situation is “ripe.”
4. Tools to overcome a groups dysfunction and natural tendency to defer to the person in charge.
5. Examples from 4-H, Horticulture, Natural Resources, and County Issues.

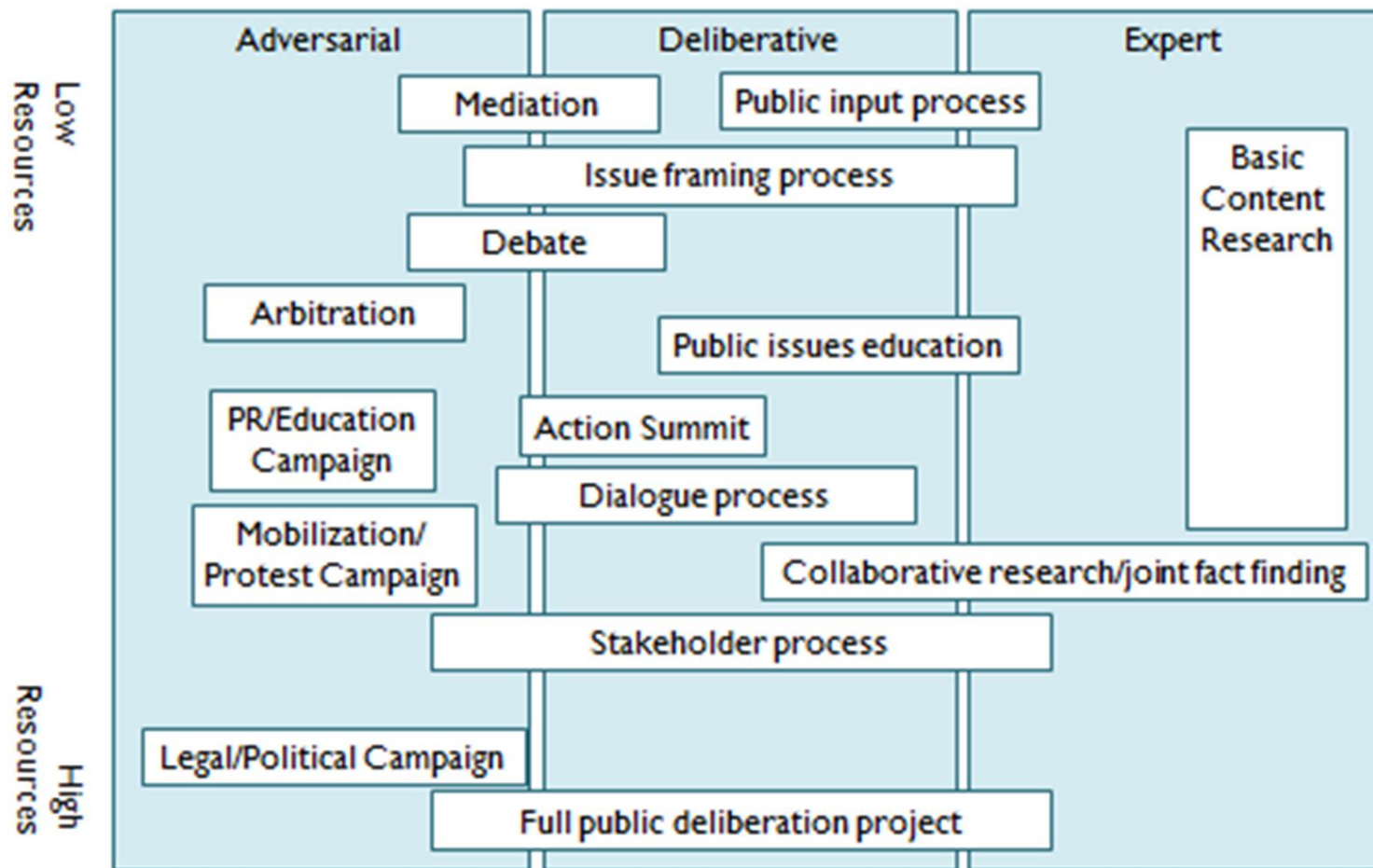


## Intervention Spectrum

- Adversarial:
  - Mediation, arbitration, debate, protest campaign, legal/political campaign.
- Deliberative:
  - Public input or process, issue framing, public issues education, action summit, dialog process, stakeholder process, full public deliberation.
- Expert:
  - Basic content research, fact finding, expert presentations.



## Intervention Spectrum





# Considering Deliberative Ripeness

1. Primarily involves tensions between positive values.
2. All major stakeholders realize the need for action.
3. Need for broad action by many stakeholders, or broad behavioral change.
4. A large “middle” area exists and is accessible.
5. Misunderstanding across perspectives, but adequate trust between parties.
6. Where decisions haven’t been made.
7. Significant resources exist to support the choices.
8. You are seen as a neutral party.



## Examples of when Not to get Involved

1. When a decision has already been made and they want you to help others “buy in” to the decision.
2. Making a decision on a “yes/no” question (policy).
3. Resolving a conflict in favor of one side.
4. Support the status quo to squelch dissent.
5. When you need a quick answer or the process is too far down the road to “reframe” it.
6. When you may be perceived as being biased.

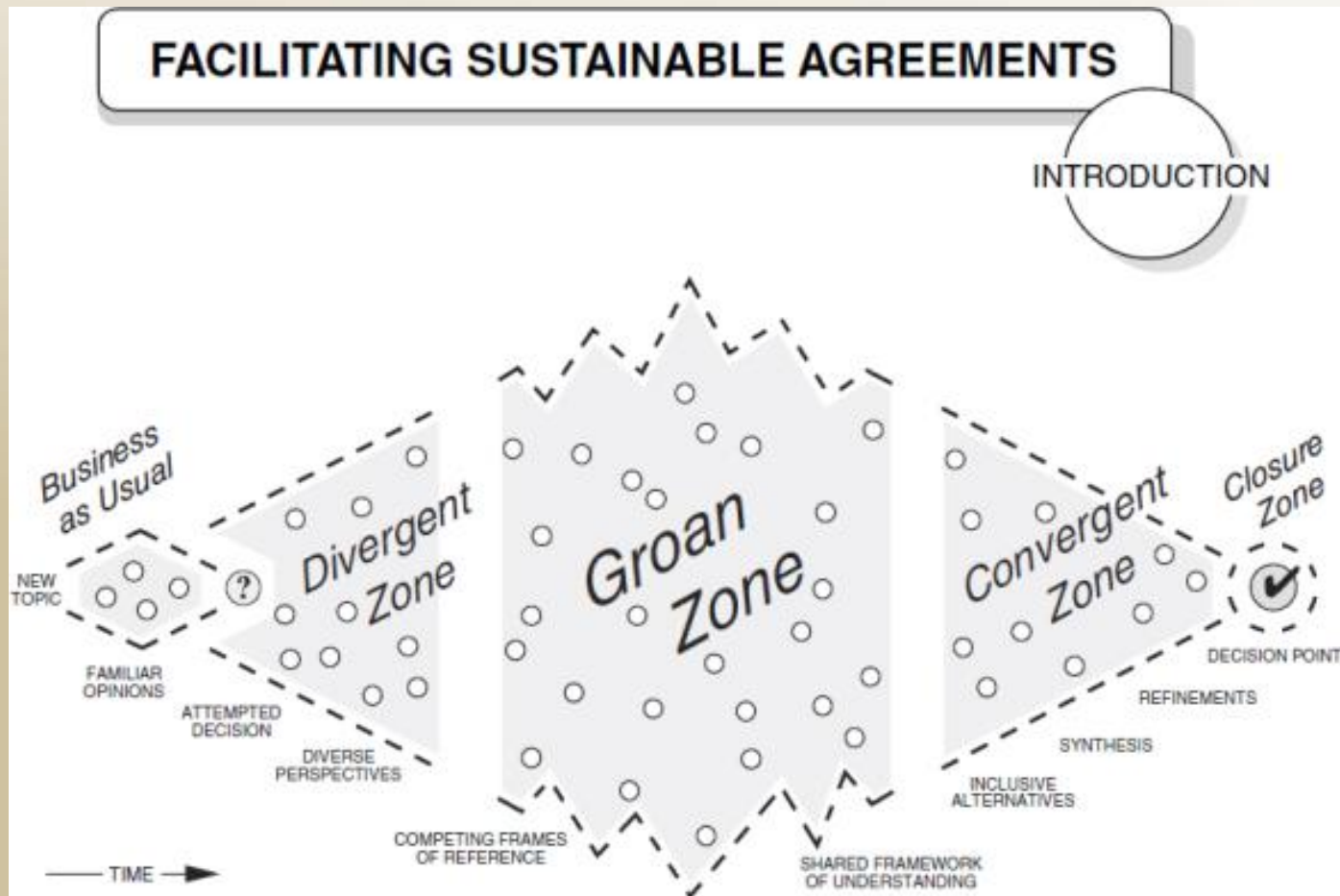


## Baseline Tools

1. Establish agreed-upon norms.
2. Identify common ground.
3. Include all stakeholders and sides.
4. Frame the issue before meeting and include accurate accounting of all views.
  - a) This may be the most important step.



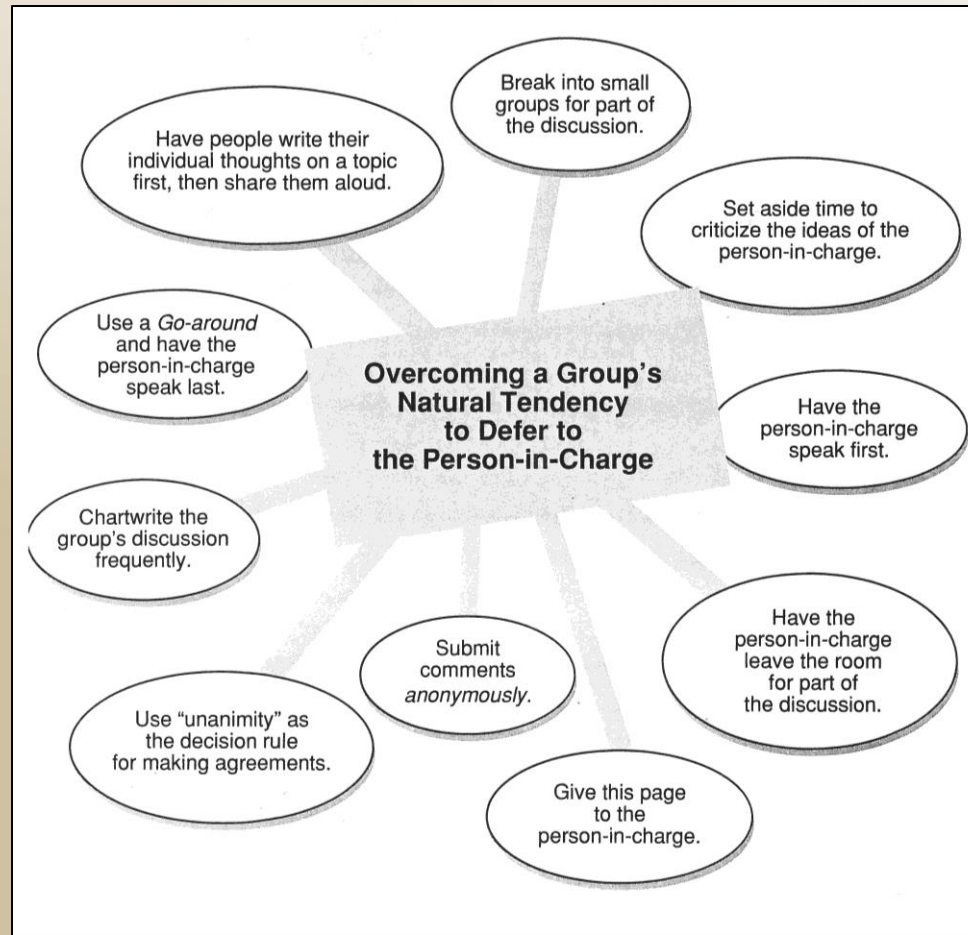
# Kaner's Diamond of Participatory Decision-Making





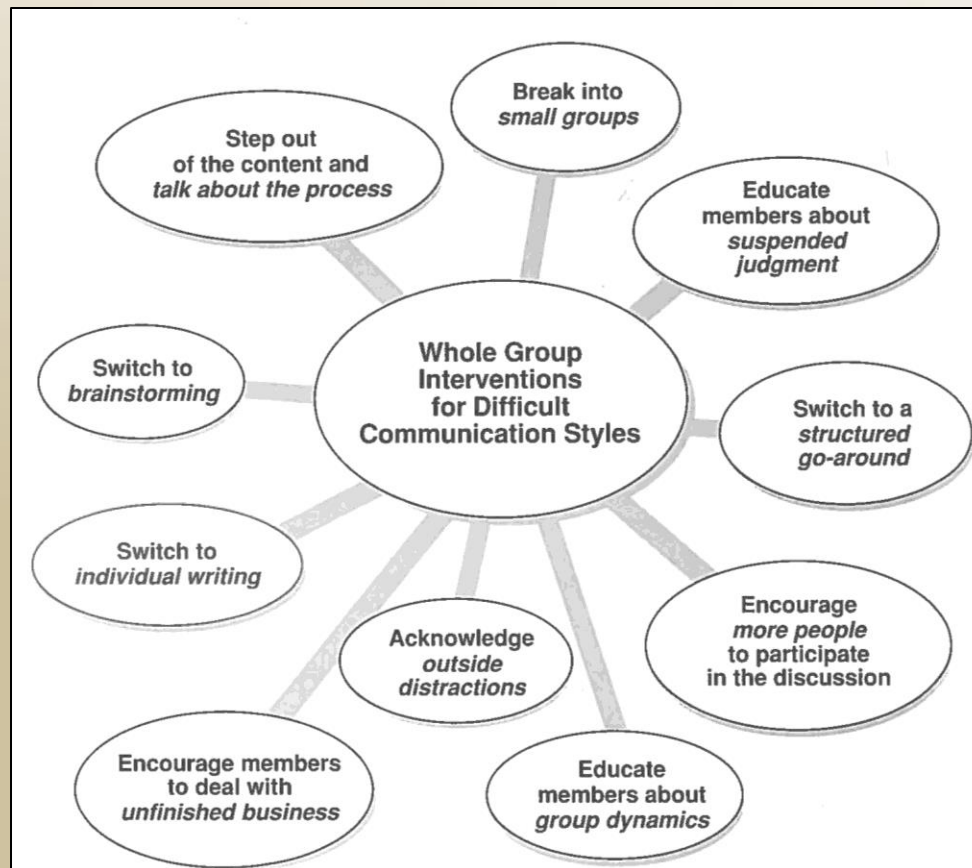
# Interventions for Difficult Communication Styles

(From “Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making”)



# Interventions for Difficult Communication Styles

(From “Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making”)





## Examples

1. New 4-H Fairgrounds in Park County.
2. Farmers' Market with old and new members.
3. County wanting me to facilitate Department conflicts.
4. Waldo Canyon and Black Forest Fire Issues.
5. New Stadium at Colorado State University



## Conclusion

- If people don't participate in, and own, the solution to problems, or agree to the decision; implementation will be half-hearted at best, probably misunderstood, and will more than likely fail.