

Additional Notes for the Stages and Behaviours of the Time to Think Council

1) Presentation of 5-10 minutes

One person (the Presenter) describes a problem, issue, situation or opportunity that they would like to get others' views, ideas and perspectives on. They can draw or write on a flipchart if that helps to describe the issue. The Presenter says as much as they think will be useful for the Council to hear. The Council gives interrupted, generative Attention all the time that the Presenter is speaking.

2) Formation of the Question

The Facilitator (or Chair) works with the Presenter to formulate the question that they want the Council to address. Ideally it's succinct.

3) Clarifying Round

A brief Round where anyone can ask a clarifying questions to ensure they've understood the question they're being asked to address. Care must be taken not to coach or to begin to answer the question or offer a solution / idea. The round is to Clarify only.

4) Confirmation of Question

The Facilitator confirms the Presenter's question and checks that this is still what they would like Council input on.

5) Initial Council thinking time

The Council is given 1-2 minutes to consider the question and write down their initial thoughts - legibly - on a clean sheet of paper (they will do more notes at the end and then give the full sheet to the Presenter).

6) Council Round (c20-30 minutes)

Each member of the Council responds to the Presenter's question whilst the others give generative Attention to the person speaking. No advice is given, it is only speaking from experience or from what the member might do in that situation.

7) End of Round (5-10 minutes)

When the Round is complete, the Facilitator asks the Presenter: What is your freshest thinking now? The Presenter can say as much or as little as they like. They do not have to approve or agree or disagree with anything that a Council member has said, or to say what they are going to do about it – unless they wish to.

8) Another Round

If there is desire, time and the need, the Facilitator can check in that the question is still accurate and ask if another Round would be useful where people could build on their previous ideas.

9) End of Rounds

Each person adds their thoughts on paper to give them to the Presenter. The notes are all given to the Presenter as a gift.

10) Appreciation Round

All members of the Council express, in a Round, a quality that they have seen in the Presenter.

11) Participation Appreciation Round

If there is time, each member of the Council says what they have most appreciated about being part of the Council. This includes the Presenter.

The Council works because it is underpinned by the 10 components – respecting the equality and diversity of all participants. The focus is on generating the best possible thinking for the Presenter.

What does the Presenter do?

The Presenter brings their issue, problem, or project to the rest of the group. He or she:

- Needs to be relatively clear in their mind what they want to bring and why
- Brings a topic that is real, live and where there is a degree of complexity
- Describes the issues so that people can make sense of it but without too much back story
- Listens to all contributions during the Round
- Is under no obligation to take away or action any of the Councils ideas
- Retains full ownership of the problem and they decide on any action they would like to take
- Continues to think, for themselves, throughout the session

What do members of the Council do?

- Listen attentively to the Presentation & other Council members without interruption
- Do their own best thinking on the problem – think for themselves
- Provide input using the language of experience, not advice
- Listen to all ideas openly and supportively using the 10 components as a guide
- Be mindful of ‘equality’ of time – being succinct so that others can speak
- Avoid diagnosing, advising, recommending, or providing solutions
- Avoid coaching “in the moment”
- Avoid judgement, taking sides or getting sucked in.
- Welcomes diversity and respects confidentiality
- Avoid sentences that start with:
 - If I were you
 - If you were me
 - You need to / should do/try/be...
 - Why haven’t / don’t you....?
 - Why would you think that?
- **Use sentences that start with or include the word ‘I, me, mine’:**
 - In my experience...
 - This reminds me of a time..
 - What I would find challenging would be...
 - If I was faced with a similar problem I might choose to focus on this area...
 - I remember when I experienced...
 - This made me think about ...

What does the Facilitator do?

- Holds the process and ensures the focus remains on thinking
- Ensure that the Council is clear about what is being asked / what the question is
- Provides the direction of the round and clarifies how long people have to contribute
- Intervenes if needed to ensure that the Presenter is not being explicitly or implicitly told what to think or do or when the groups needs support and guidance
- Sets the tone for the Council and models the 10 components of the Thinking Environment.

With thanks to Sophie Stephenson for her work on this.