**PRIYADARSHINI COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, NAGPUR**

**Course: Organizational Behaviour**

**Handouts**

**Topic: Johari Window Model**

### **What is the Johari Window Model?**

The Johari Window model is a simple and useful tool for illustrating and improving self-awareness and mutual understanding between individuals within a group. It can also be used to assess and improve a group's relationship with other groups. **This model is, therefore, particularly useful in team development.**

It was devised by American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955, while researching group dynamics at the University of California Los Angeles. The model was first published in the Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development by UCLA Extension Office in 1955 and was later expanded by Joseph Luft.

**Today the Johari Window model is especially relevant due to the modern emphasis on, and influence of, 'soft' skills, behaviour, empathy, cooperation, inter-group development and interpersonal development.**

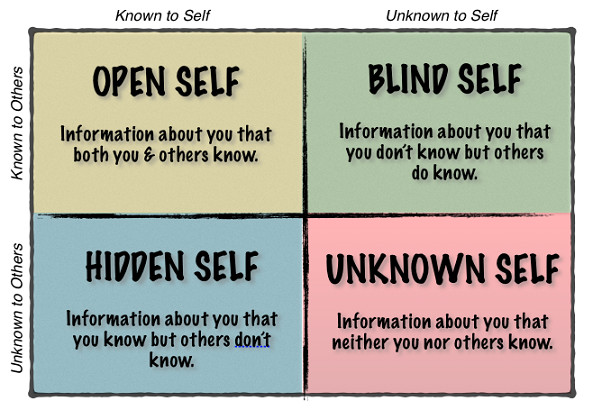
The Johari Window concept is particularly helpful in understanding employee/employer relationships within [the Psychological Contract](https://www.businessballs.com/building-relationships/the-psychological-contract/). Over the years, alternative terminology has been developed and adapted by different people—particularly for descriptions of the four regions—hence the use of different terms in this explanation.

## **The Johari Window Model Diagram**

#### **Background Information**

Luft and Ingham called their Johari Window model 'Johari' after combining their first names, Joe and Harry. In early publications, the word appears as 'JoHari'. The Johari Window soon became a widely used model for understanding and training self-awareness, personal development, communication, interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, team development and inter-group relationships.

#### **How is the Johari Window Model used?**



This model is also referred to as a 'disclosure/feedback model of "self-awareness" and by some people as an "information processing tool".

* The Johari Window actually represents information—feelings, experience, views, attitudes, skills, intentions, motivation, etc—within or about a person in relation to their group, from the four perspectives described below.
* The model can also be used to represent the same information for a group in relation to other groups. Terminology hereafter refers to 'self' and 'others': 'self' means oneself, ie, the person subject to the analysis. 'Others' means other people in the person's group or team.
* The four Johari Window perspectives are called 'regions,' 'areas' or 'quadrants'. Each of these regions contains and represents the information—feelings, motivation, etc—known about the person, in terms of whether the information is known or unknown by the person, and whether the information is known or unknown by others in the group. The four regions in the model are outlined in detail below.

**Note:**When the Johari Window model is used to assess and develop groups in relation to other groups, the 'self' would be the group, and 'others' would be other groups. However, for ease of explanation and understanding of the model and examples in this article, think of the model applying to an individual within a group, rather than a group relating to other groups.

## **What are the Four Regions of the Johari Window Model?**

1. What is known by the person about themselves and is also known by others - **open area, open self, free area, free self, or 'the arena'**
2. What is unknown by the person about themselves, but which others know - **blind area, blind self, or 'blindspot'**
3. What the person knows about themselves that others do not know - **hidden area, hidden self, avoided area, avoided self or 'facade'**
4. What is unknown by the person about themselves and is also unknown by others - **unknown area or unknown self**

Like some other behavioural models (eg, [Tuckman, Hersey/Blanchard](https://www.businessballs.com/team-management/tuckman-forming-storming-norming-performing-model/)), the Johari Window is based on a four-square grid - **it is like a window with four 'panes'. Here's how the Johari Window is normally shown, with its four regions:**

**The four 'panes' can be changed in size to reflect the relevant proportions of each type of 'knowledge' of/about a particular person in a given group or team situation.**

* In new groups or teams, the open free space for any team member is small (see below) because shared awareness is relatively small.
* As the team member becomes better established and known, so the size of the team member's open free area quadrant increases (see below)

### **Explanation of the Johari Window Model**

### **Johari Window Model Quadrant 1**

##### 'Open Self/Area' or 'Free Area' or 'Public Area', or 'Arena'

Region 1 is also known as the 'area of free activity'. This is the information about the person—behaviour, attitude, feelings, emotion, knowledge, experience, skills, views, etc.—**known** by the person ('the self') and **known** by the group ('others').

**The aim in any group should always be to develop the 'open area' for every person because we are most productive and effective when we work in this area with others, and the group is at its most productive too. The open free area, or 'the arena', can be seen as the space where good communications and cooperation occur, free from distractions, mistrust, confusion, conflict and misunderstanding.**

* Established team members logically tend to have larger open areas than new team members. New team members start with relatively small open areas because relatively little knowledge about the new team member is shared. The size of the open area can be expanded horizontally into the blind space, by seeking and actively listening to feedback from other group members. This process is known as**'feedback solicitation'.**
* Other group members can help a team member expand their open area by offering feedback, sensitively of course. The size of the open area can also be expanded vertically downwards into the hidden or avoided space by the person's disclosure of information, feelings, etc. about him/herself to the group and group members.
* Group members can help a person expand their open area into the hidden area by asking the person about him/herself. Managers and team leaders can play an important role in facilitating feedback and disclosure among group members and indirectly giving feedback to individuals about their own blind areas.
* Leaders also have a big responsibility to promote the sharing of knowledge throughout their organisation, as well as a culture of open, positive, sensitive and constructive communication. Top-performing groups, departments, companies and organizations always tend to have a culture of open positive communication. Hence, encouraging the positive development of the **'open area' or 'open self'** for everyone is a simple yet fundamental aspect of effective leadership.

### **Johari Window Model Quadrant 2**

#### **'Blind Self' or 'Blind Area' or 'Blindspot'**

Region 2 is what is **known** about a person by others in the group, but is **unknown** by the person themselves.

* By seeking or soliciting feedback from others, the aim should be to reduce this area and thereby to increase the open area i.e, to increase self-awareness.
* This blind area is not an effective or productive space for individuals or groups. This blind area could also be referred to as ignorance about oneself, or issues about which one is deluded.
* A blind area could also include issues that others are deliberately withholding from a person. This relates to the difficulty one experiences when being "kept in the dark".

Group members and managers can take some responsibility for helping an individual to reduce their blind area—in turn increasing the open area—by **giving sensitive feedback and encouraging disclosure.**

* Managers should promote a climate of non-judgemental feedback, and group response to individual disclosure, which reduces fear and therefore encourages both processes to happen.
* The extent to which an individual seeks feedback, and the issues on which feedback is sought, must always be at the individual's own discretion.
* Some people are more resilient than others—care needs to be taken to avoid causing emotional upset. The process of soliciting serious and deep feedback relates to the process of 'self-actualization' described in  [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](https://www.businessballs.com/self-awareness/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/) development and motivation model.

### **Johari Window Model Quadrant 3**

### **'Hidden Self' or 'Hidden Area' or 'Avoided Self' or 'Facade'**

Region 3 is what is **known** to ourselves but kept hidden from, and therefore **unknown**, to others.

* This hidden or avoided self represents anything that a person knows about themselves—information, feelings, etc.,—which is not revealed, or is kept hidden from others.
* The hidden area could also include sensitivities, fears, hidden agendas, manipulative intentions, secrets—anything that a person knows but does not reveal, for whatever reason.
* It is natural for very personal and private information and feelings to remain hidden. Indeed, certain information, feelings and experiences have no bearing on work, and so can and should remain hidden. However, a lot of hidden information is not very personal, it is work—or performance—related, and so is better positioned in the open area.

**Relevant hidden information and feelings, etc, should be moved into the open area through the process of 'disclosure'.**

* The aim should be to disclose and expose relevant information and feelings—hence the Johari Window terminology 'self-disclosure' and 'exposure process', thereby increasing the open area.
* By telling others how we feel and other information about ourselves, we reduce the hidden area and increase the open area. This enables better understanding, cooperation, trust, team-working effectiveness and productivity.
* Reducing hidden areas also reduces the potential for confusion, misunderstanding, poor communication, etc, all of which distract from and undermine team effectiveness.

**Organizational culture and working atmosphere have a major influence on group members' readiness to disclose their hidden selves.** Most people fear judgement or vulnerability and therefore hold back hidden information. If moved into the open area—i.e. made known by the group as well—this would enhance mutual understanding, thereby improving group awareness and enabling better individual performance and group effectiveness.

**The extent to which an individual discloses personal feelings and information, the issues which are disclosed, and to whom they are disclosed must always be at the individual's own discretion**. As with feedback, some people are more resilient than others—care needs to be taken to avoid causing emotional upset. Also, as with soliciting feedback, the process of serious disclosure relates to the process of 'self-actualization' described in [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](https://www.businessballs.com/self-awareness/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/) development and motivation model.

### **Johari Window Model Quadrant 4**

### **'Unknown Self' or 'Area of Unknown Activity' or 'Unknown Area'**

Region 4 contains information, feelings, latent abilities, aptitudes, experiences etc., that are **unknown** to themselves and **unknown** to others in the group.**These unknown issues take a variety of forms:**

* They can be feelings, behaviours, attitudes, capabilities, aptitudes, which can be quite close to the surface, or a deeper aspects of a person's personality, influencing their behaviour to various degrees. Large unknown areas would typically be expected in younger people, and people who lack experience or self-belief.

There are several examples of unknown factors, the first of which is particularly common and relevant in organisations and teams. These include:

* An ability that is under-estimated or un-tried through lack of opportunity, encouragement, confidence or training
* A natural ability or aptitude that a person does not realise they possess
* A fear or aversion that a person does not know they have
* An unknown illness
* Repressed or subconscious feelings
* Conditioned behaviour or attitudes from childhood

**The processes by which this information and knowledge can be uncovered are varied** and can be prompted through self-discovery or observation by others. This can also occur in certain situations through collective or mutual discovery during intensive group work, such as outward bound courses. Counselling can also uncover unknown issues, but this would then be known to the person and by one other, rather than by a group.

* Whether unknown 'discovered' knowledge moves into the hidden, blind or open area depends on who discovers it and what they do with the knowledge—notably whether it is then given as feedback, or disclosed. As with the processes of soliciting feedback and disclosure, striving to discover information and feelings in the unknown is related to the process of 'self-actualization' described in [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](https://www.businessballs.com/self-awareness/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/) development and motivation model.
* Again, as with disclosure and soliciting feedback, the process of self-discovery is a sensitive one. The extent and depth to which an individual is able to discover their unknown feelings must always be at the individual's own discretion.
* Uncovering 'hidden talents'—that is unknown aptitudes and skills, not to be confused with developing the Johari 'hidden area'—is another aspect of developing the unknown area and is not as sensitive as unknown feelings. Providing people with the opportunity to try new things, with no great pressure to succeed, is often a useful way to discover unknown abilities and thereby reduce the unknown area.

**Managers and leaders can help by creating an environment that encourages self-discovery, and promoting the processes of self-discovery, constructive observation and feedback among team members.**  Creating a culture, climate and expectation for self-discovery helps people to fulfil more of their potential and thereby to achieve more, and to contribute more to organisational performance.

Source credit: <https://www.businessballs.com/self-awareness/johari-window-model-and-free-diagrams/>