

THE BIG AMNESTY SKILL SHARE



HEALTHY GROUPS 2

DISCUSS & DECIDE

Sometimes group members are too polite to question a decision. Sometimes group members are too challenging and decisions don't get made! Think about how decisions get made – or not – in your group.

PROS AND CONS

If you have several suggestions during a meeting about how to do something use a flip chart and list the benefits and drawbacks. You can do this as a whole group or divide into two or three and each look at the pros and cons of one suggestion each.

ACTIVE AGREEMENT

How do you know if everyone has agreed with a decision? We can sometimes assume consensus, when really some people haven't felt confident enough to disagree, or haven't had time to think about their decision. Don't mistake silence for consent because if the decision wasn't fully supported it won't get done.

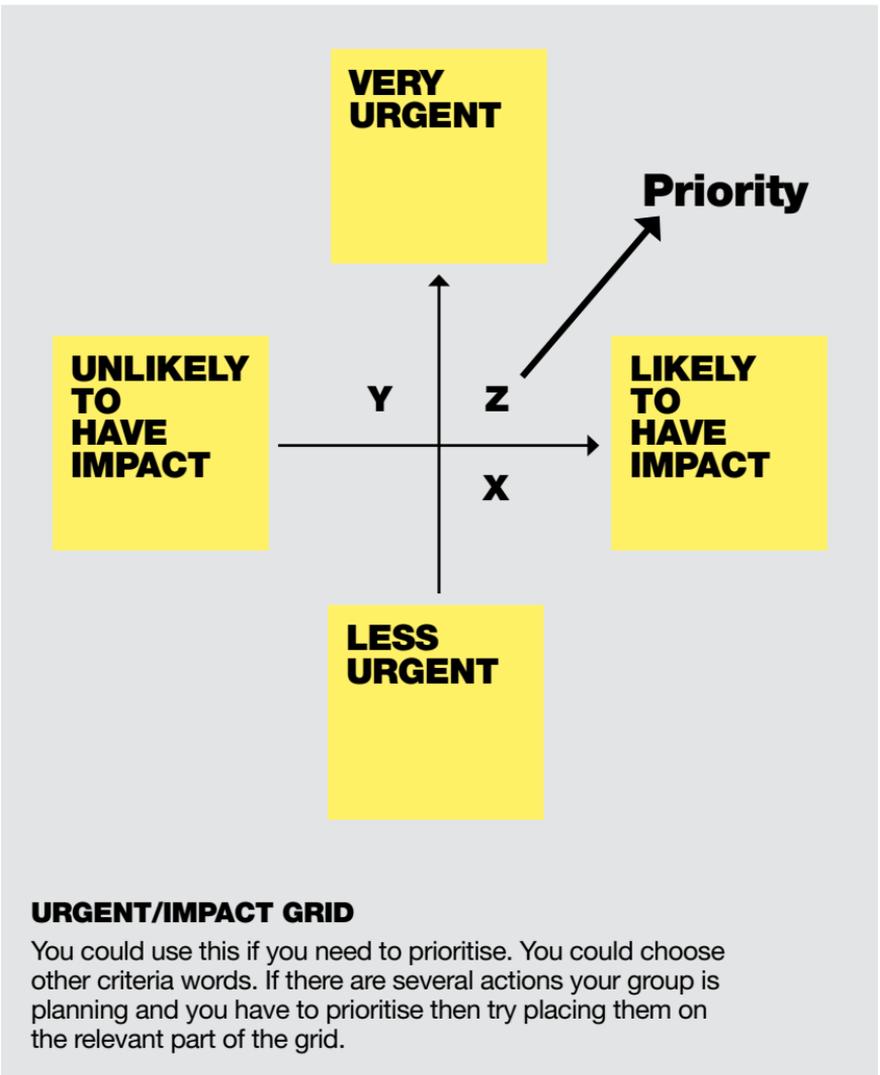
Your group could practice active agreement on all decisions. Although voting can seem over formal, you could ask people to wave a hand if they broadly agree, or give a thumbs down if they really disagree.



BIG DISAGREEMENTS

Sometimes one or two people are blocking consensus. You could ask for an alternative proposal from them, or others, which might also carry the rest of the group. You could ask if they are prepared to 'stand aside' on this one issue – that is not be involved in the decision or the consequent action.

HEALTHY GROUPS



WORKING IN PAIRS AND SMALL GROUPS

Even if your group isn't very large people will still benefit from splitting up from time to time to discuss something because:

- Someone can dominate a whole group discussion, making it harder for others to try out an idea.
- It can defuse discussions that become heated.
- You can split up into different discussion topics and get more done.



THE PARKING LOT

Do you ever find that your discussions suffer from distractions?

If you want to keep focused on an issue, and others arise that aren't helping, have a piece of paper on the wall which is your parking lot, where you park ideas that can't be dealt with then and there.

At the end of your discussion, check the parking lot and see if these issues still need dealing with. Important ones may be a subject for a later meeting.