Embodied Learning Module
Understanding Decision Making Systems

Aims
1. Provide an opportunity for participants to relate to their prior experience in group decision making.
2. Generate a list of four main decision making systems (autocratic, majority, unanimity and consent) used as the basis for the ROT and DM Roundtable EL activities.
3. Introduce the concept of making decisions by consent and the differentiation between unanimity and consent.

Environment

Seating in a circle for all participants, facilitator and assistant(s).

Materials

Flip chart or white board and colored markers.

Preparation

Prepare the flip chart with a grid as shown here.

System	Rule	Benefits	Challenges

Leave four equally tall blank rows to fill in during the activity.

VARIATION: Only include the "System" and "Rule" for each system and develop the benefits and challenges using inquiry during the ROT ELM.

Activity Description
1. Invite your participants to form pairs (with one group of three for an odd number of participants) and sit together before beginning the activity.
2. Invite the participants to take about two minutes each to share one experience of decision making in a group with the partner, with attention to the quality of the experience. Monitor time and ring a bell or announce when two minutes have passed. After five minutes, invite the participants to return to the circle.
3. Invite the participants to consider what they would call the type of decision making system they experienced and the rule used for the actual decision.
4. Ask for someone to share the name of one DM system they experienced. Write it down on the chart (see below for the order) and then ask about the rule (what it means to make a decision). Ask for benefits and challenges of this DM system and record them on the chart. *VARIATION: Only include the "Name" and "Rule" for each system and develop the benefits and challenges using inquiry during the ROT ELM.*
5. Repeat the previous step until you have completed the chart for autocratic, majority vote and unanimity DM systems. Use a different color marker for each rule and fill in the chart rows from top to bottom in this order: 1. Autocratic; 2. Majority Vote; 3. Leave Blank (Consent goes here); 4. Unanimity. Refer to the Main Points section below for an example of the completed chart and the primary benefits and challenges for each DM rule.

6. Introduce consent decision making as the fourth DM system in the third chart row.
7. Alternative: If time is short, just write the grid on a flipchart or whiteboard, and brainstorm the four rules, benefits and challenges in the large group (Steps 4 - 6). *VARIATION: Only include the "Name" and "Rule" for each system and develop the benefits and challenges using inquiry during the ROT ELM.*

Inquiry Framework

Not Applicable

Main Points

This is provided as an example. The group may come up with more benefits or challenges than the primary ones listed here.

Name	Rule	Benefits	Challenges
Autocratic	One person decides	Efficiency, ease	Quality of decision unpredictable; low buy-in; all other voices ignored
Majority Vote	Majority gets its way (50% +1)	Ease, "fairness" (everyone has a vote), familiarity	Variable buy-in; voices of minority are ultimately ignored
Consent	Nobody objects	Every voice heard; quality of decisions increases with practice; decisions are "good enough for now"	Requires maturity and discipline in group process; learning curve; can be time consuming
Unanimity	Everyone agrees	Every voice heard; maximum buy-in	Potential for actual or perceived coercion and resulting resentment; can be time-consuming; can produce attachment to making decisions that are "perfect and last forever"

If the group brings up other systems (e.g. chaos or tradition) or variations on one of the main systems (e.g. plurality or super-majority), acknowledge them and return to the precise definitions of the four main systems as a basis for other activities.