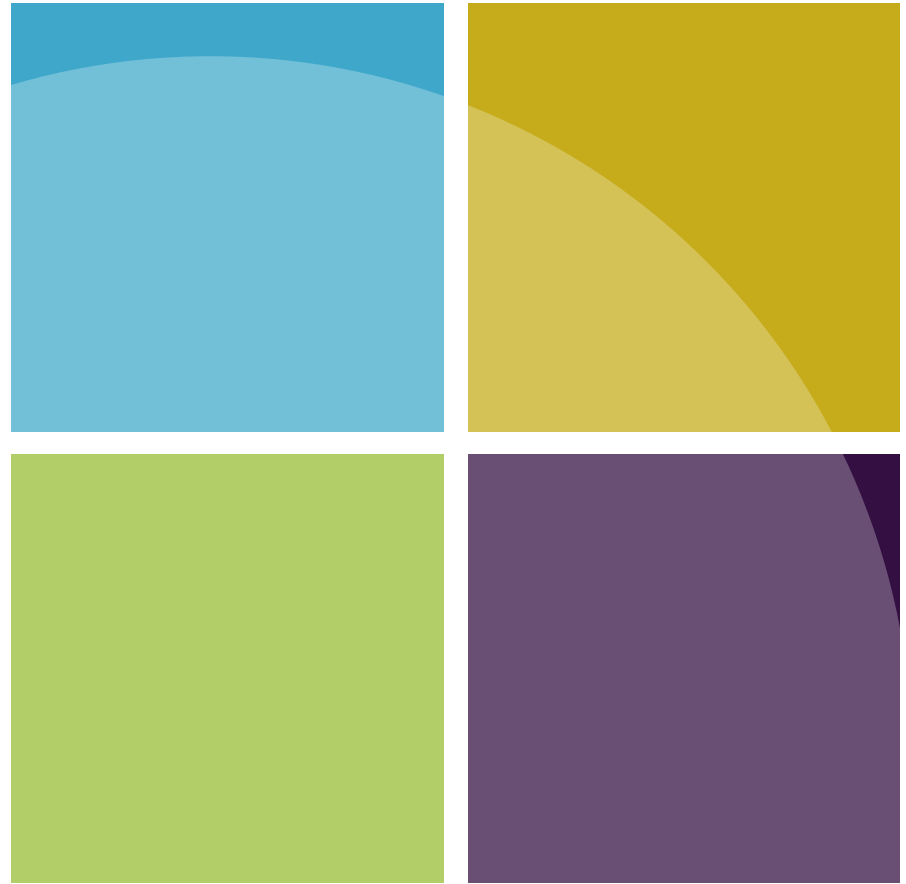


Better negotiations.
Better decision making.
Better results.



Difficult Public Conversations



Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

- CBI is an internationally recognized non-profit, founded in 1993
- **Our mission:** Empower stakeholders—public and private, government and community—to resolve issues, reach better more durable agreements, and build stronger relationships.

30+ Staff

Working Internationally

OFFICES

Cambridge, MA
New York
San Francisco
Washington, D.C.
Santiago, Chile
Montreal, Canada

Affiliated with

MIT-Harvard Public Disputes
Program

MIT Department of Urban
Studies and Planning

Expertise

Energy, Environment &
Land Use

International
Development

Social Policy & Cultural
Resources

Corporate Community
Engagement

Organizational
Governance & Strategy

Commercial Agreement

Services

Negotiation Audits

Training & Coaching

Strategic Advising

Issues & Stakeholder
Assessment

Process Design

Mediation

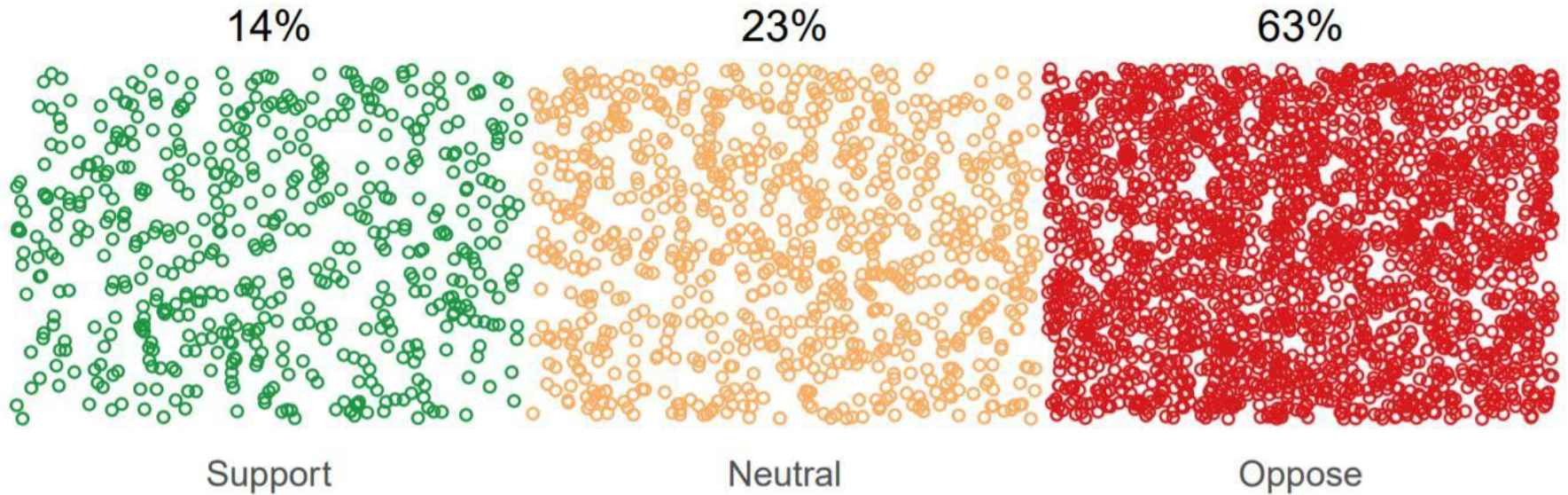
Facilitation

Stakeholder Engagement

Research & Evaluation



What People Say at Public Meetings About New Housing



Personal questions . . . ?

1. When someone steps hard on your toe on public transit or in a jostling crowd, what is your first reaction?
2. When someone cuts in line in front of you, what do you feel?
3. When your child comes home from a bad day at school or a spouse or roommate comes home from a bad day at work, what do you do?

And a professional question . . . ?

Why are people coming to public meetings, public spaces, and public venues angry?

Enter a short word or phrase (only a few words) into Mentimeter

(you can enter up to 3)

<https://www.menti.com/>

What do people need?

MOST

- Offense as defense
- Release
- Acknowledgement
- Agency and influence
- A semblance of fairness

AND SOME

- Disruption
- Leverage
- Power

Cognitive Barriers to Constructive Engagement

- Reactive devaluation
- Risk aversion
- Proximal dependence
- Opposition bias and spiral of silence
- Information bias (minds are stubborn things)
- Implicit (and explicit) bias

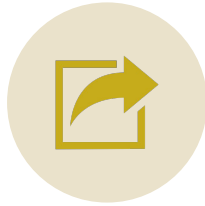
Tools We Won't Cover in this Module but Important!

- Norms and groundrules
- Time limits
- Structured agendas
- Spatial arrangements
- Stakeholder assessment
- Diverse meeting formats
- Quality audio-visual
- Multiple means to participate
- Timing and sequencing
- Offer options not decisions

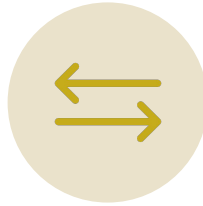
Elements for Success

Intent
Assumptions
Behaviors
Strategies
Tools

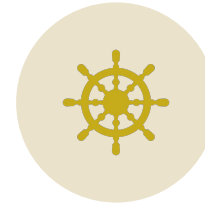
What is your intent?



SHARE



SHAPE



STEER



SCHOOL

Assumptions

People are doing the best that they can

You don't know the life people bring into the room

You're not responsible for (nor can control) other's emotions & behaviors

You are accountable for your own behaviors

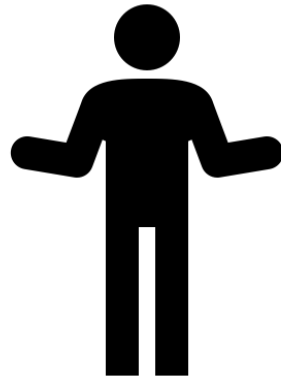
There are multiple ways to interpret a situation

Public service is not servitude

Norms can matter

Behaviors

Manage your body first



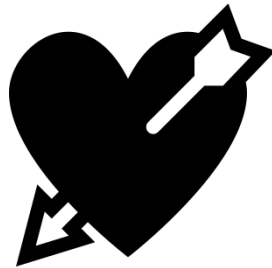
Behaviors

Listen, listen and listen



Behaviors

Acknowledge



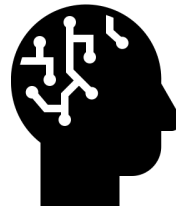
Behaviors

Recognize your own emotions



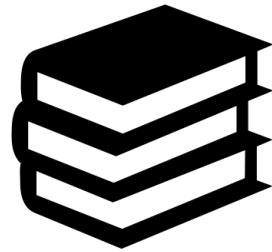
Behaviors

Respond don't react



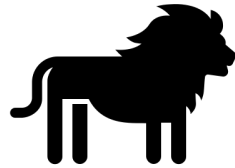
Behaviors

Learn and share (don't lecture)



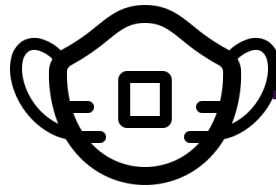
Behaviors

Be firm; set boundaries



STRATEGIES

Put your oxygen mask on first



What behaviors do you use to be more effective in public meetings?

Enter a short comment into Mentimeter

<https://www.menti.com/>

STRATEGIES



Suspend

Suspend judgment



Look

**Look for the valid
(emotions, needs, wants)**



Listen

**Listen for interests and
values not positions**



Pick

Pick your battles

STRATEGIES



Focus

Keep your eye on the prize



Operate

Operate fairly and transparently



Distinguish

Distinguish IF from HOW



Don't

Don't go into a box canyon without a rope



Take

Take a break

Implicit Bias

Identify



Address



Examples - Implicit Bias

“We need to ensure the safety of our communities”

“We have to consider the impact on property values”

“We need to prevent overcrowding and maintain quality of life”

“We need to ensure our resources are used effectively”

Questions and Discussion

