

CRITICAL THINKING - Exercise for Citizens' Juries

Before you begin

Place one card and an A4 2-sided document on each participant's seat or at each participants place.

Introduction

Overview the usual brain biases and how critical thinking skills can help overcome them when used carefully. Critical thinking skills ensure good interrogation of data and ultimately to help groups make better, more long-lasting decisions.

Especially when groups are making decisions together its important to be able to carefully interrogate evidence, data, information and even differing opinions/views (our own included), to find common ground.

To give you an overview of what critical thinking is here is a short video that explains the concept of 'thinking critically'. (Please excuse the American references).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzV1pNQUX5s>

Time needed

Minimum: 3 minutes for film clips, 10 minutes for distribution of cards plus discussion and 10 mins for collecting examples from the room (total 23 mins)

Other Uses Outside Citizens' Juries

Critical thinking is a key skill for individuals and groups who are tasked with making decisions, particularly when those decisions need to be made collaboratively, and when interrogating data or knowledge.

Everyone can be easily persuaded by their own brain biases and subsequently miss vital information that their minds are blind.

Critical thinking helps people reveal these biases, uncover new information and consider different views when making decisions.

Therefore, the critical thinking exercise and cards can be used in the following situations:

- Issue identification
- Problem solving
- Strategic planning
- Analysis of information

Activity

Invite participants to pick up their card and tell them that we will practice critical thinking. First ask them to focus on one key mode of questioning and outline that their 'mission' for the next task is to strengthen this mode of questioning as best they can.

Invite participants to find 3-4 other people who have the same coloured card as them (the same mode of questioning) and together as a group consider the sorts of questions that would help ensure that frame of critical thinking is well explored.

It is useful to have a few examples for the workshop topic you are exploring. Put them up to help people start thinking. Possibly gather one or two examples to help get people's imagination working.

Give each cluster 10 mins to explore the types of questions they will need to ask to ensure that their mode of questioning is well explored later on in relation to the workshop topic.

After 10 mins ask the groups for examples relating to each of the 6 modes of questioning. Scribe these workshop specific examples on butcher's paper at the front of the room.

When you move into the next task (whatever it may be) ask each person to focus on their designated card, mode of questioning, for the duration of the speaker, the session, the day, whatever seems appropriate. Let the group know that each juror will have an opportunity to practise other *modes of questioning* later.

Then for the next speaker, session or day, rotate the cards so that jurors have an opportunity to focus on a different mode. Repeat as often as possible.