

Creating Out Loud: A “council style” approach to peer coaching



Overview

Purpose

This Discussion Guide outlines a “council style” approach to Goal-focused peer coaching that your circle might like to use – either alone or in combination with Creating Out Loud Topic-based Discussion Guides.

Agenda

The approach described here is a simplified form of the “council style” model outlined in a book called *Peer Coaching at Work*.^[1]

In this approach, each circle member takes turns to bring one question, issue, problem, or concern to the meeting. The other circle members play the role of a “council,” giving advice and/or sharing resources related to each person’s question / issue.

Like all Creating Out Loud sessions, these meetings include a “Being here” check-in and a “What next?” check-out, to build connection and continuity across sessions.

Depending on the number of members in your circle, “council style” peer-coaching meetings can last between 1½ and 2 hours.



Time management is critical to ensuring that every member has a turn. Your circle may like to appoint a different timekeeper for each meeting.

Activity	Suggested timing
Being here	Approx. 10 minutes**
Council session	Approx. 1 – 1½ hours
Issue presentation & clarification	Maximum 5 minutes
Advice	Maximum 10 minutes**
(repeat the Issue presentation & clarification and Advice steps above for each circle member)	
What next?	Approx. 5 minutes**

TIP: Goal-focused sessions take 15 minutes for each member, plus 15 minutes for the group:

- For a circle with 4 people, plan for a total meeting time of 75 minutes
- For a circle with 5 people, plan for a total meeting time of 90 minutes.

** If your circle is short on time, relative to its number of members, you can reduce the amount of time spent on Issue presentation & clarification. However, remember that allocating more time to each step can improve accessibility for some circle members.



Being here

Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which you are meeting, and pay respects to their Elders – past, present, and emerging.	
If this is your first meeting...	If this is not your first meeting...
Share your name and how you are currently involved in the arts and culture sector...	Share what follow-up step(s) you have taken since your last meeting... If you did not take the step(s) you planned to take, share one thing you learned or one thing you enjoyed since the last meeting...

At the start of each meeting, decide which circle member will be the timekeeper.

This role is critical to ensuring that all circle members can bring their issues and concerns to the group, and that everyone receives the same opportunity to receive feedback and advice from other circle members.



Council session

1. Issue presentation

- One person goes first, to explain (in 3 minutes or less) the question, issue, or problem about which they are seeking advice. This tight timeframe means you will need to get to the point quickly and mention only enough background or context to help other circle members (the “council”) understand your question, issue, or problem.
- Once your three minutes is up, avoid speaking again unless asked a question. You might like to use the space below to make notes, so that you remember to say all of the key points you want to mention.

TIP: Be as personal / detailed as you feel comfortable being.



2. Issue clarification

In this part of the meeting (around 2 minutes), “council members” seek to ensure they understand the question, issue, or problem being presented – before providing advice.

- Circle members have a couple of minutes to check that they understand the question, issue, or problem being presented.
- **Ask yes/no or short-answer questions** of the presenter.^[1]
- The presenter has “no more than fifteen seconds” to **answer each question.**^[1]

These very short time limits aim to prevent this part of the meeting becoming a discussion, in itself.



Discussion of the issue and sharing advice both happen in the next step.

3. Advice

In this part of the meeting, the “council” has 10 minutes to advise the presenter.

The timekeeper divides the time available between “council” members, so that each person can share their advice with the presenter. The presenter usually does not speak during this time.

This part of the meeting ends with the presenter briefly thanking the council for its advice.

TIP: Presenters might like to use the space provided below to take notes. Or they might like to ask another circle member to take notes for them, so they can concentrate on listening to the advice.

Repeat the Council Session as many times as necessary, until all circle members have presented their issues and received advice.

What next?

Making the most of peer coaching involves taking at least one step after each meeting.

Steps you might take after this meeting include (but are not limited to):

- reflective journaling
- acting on one or more pieces of advice received during the meeting
- sharing any resources you might have that could help other circle members with their issue

At the start of the next meeting, other circle members will ask you about this step, providing a gentle form of accountability – without judgement.

What one step will you take before the next meeting?

TIP: Choosing a step now, writing it down, and telling your fellow circle members about it can help you make progress towards your goal.

References

1. Parker, P., et al., *Peer Coaching at Work*. 2020: Stanford University Press.

Additional Discussion Guides

Discussion Guides on various topics related to arts and culture can be found at [University of Queensland's Creating Out Loud](#) webpage



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The opinions in this Discussion Guide do not necessarily represent the views of The University of Queensland, funding / industry partners, or the individual members involved in the reference groups.

About Creating Out Loud

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Creating Out Loud was developed to support Queensland’s artists and arts managers as they recover from and rebuild business, artistic, and cultural practices following the COVID-19 pandemic.

For further information visit [University of Queensland's Creating Out Loud](https://www.uq.edu.au/creating-out-loud)



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This guide includes links to various web material. All links were working at the time of publication. Please note however that these links may become outdated over time.

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