

Design Clinic Format

The purpose of a "design clinic" is to respectfully engage the collective wisdom of the group around a particular challenge of a member, in order for everyone to learn. Learning is more robust when participants have a wide variety of skill-sets, community roles, and life experiences.

Design clinics are best accomplished in 30 minutes or less with one facilitator moving the group through the format below and one taking notes. One of the facilitators or another participant can serve as a timekeeper who raises a hand to indicate when to move on to the next step. Stick with the time limits to help keep participants energized and focused.

Participants and facilitators are responsible for protecting the learning space, honoring all voices, and enabling effective note-taking. Participants should strive to be concise and follow the format respectfully. Holding out a hand with palm up and/or a gentle verbal reminder can help speakers stay on track.

A design clinic begins with the presenter asking for help addressing an authentic challenge in their work. The request should relate to a particular organizational and/or geographic context.

This format is effective because:

- It ensures participants understand the real challenge(s) before giving suggestions.
- It encourages the equitable sharing of ideas.
- It allows the presenter to listen and learn rather than immediately respond or defend.

Format:

1. **“Could you help me...”**: Presenter asks for help related to a challenge in their ongoing/upcoming work, with brief context/background to provide a frame. (~2 mins)
2. **“Share more about...”**: Group inquires about the context/circumstances surrounding the question. *Note: group members should refrain from offering advice. Note: At the end of this step, the facilitator asks if the presenter wants to share additional context.* (~6-8 mins)
3. **“This makes me think of...”**: Group members share experiences and stories that this challenge makes them think about, related to work or broader life experiences. *Note: presenter listens quietly during this time.* (~6-8 mins)
4. **“You might try...”**: Group members provide suggestions about wise next steps to move the work forward. *Note: presenter is still listening quietly.* (~6-8 mins)
5. **“What struck me...”**: Presenter shares briefly about the most notable, interesting, and/or useful aspects of the discussion. (~2 mins)
 - a. At the end, encourage question asker to jot down anything running through their mind that they want to capture and might not show up in the notes.