



D5.6: Methodology from SPEAR's CoP



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Author list	
Name	Organisation
Eva Sophia Myers	<i>University of Southern Denmark</i>

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPEAR’s CoP-methodology..... 4

 Introduction..... 4

 ‘Wicked Problems’ and Structured Reflection..... 5

 SPEAR’s CoP..... 6

 SPEAR’s CoP-experiences – facilitator’s reflections at the end of SPEAR..... 7

‘Behold this diversity’ – Group exercise to develop joint reflective practice..... 8

Fostering joint reflection – Principles for participatory meetings applied in
SPEAR’s CoP-sessions 14

Peer Supervision / 360°-mentoring – SPEAR’s ‘how-to’-guide for reflective practice in SPEAR’s
Learning and Support Clusters (LSCs) 24

Useful resources 43

PARTNERS



SPEAR's CoP-methodology

Introduction

SPEAR's Community of Practice (CoP) forms one half of SPEAR's learning and support cycle, the other half being SPEAR's Community of Learning (CoL). These two communities are carefully designed to interconnect and supplement each other in forging a strong, dynamic and coherent framework and foundation for supporting the learning, collaboration and practice of SPEAR's members individually and together. SPEAR's CoL-CoP support cycle are the heart of SPEAR's orientation towards enabling the participating practitioners to succeed in their Gender Equality (GE) work and towards long-term sustainability of their GE endeavours and communities.

SPEAR's CoL-CoP conceptualization presents a tight learning-practice-feedback-learning cycle where all partners mutually benefit from the perspectives and expertise represented in the project. In accordance with SPEAR's emphasis on practice, the contents of the sessions and the learning materials have been developed continuously, drawing on the lived experience, the emergent needs and the specific contexts of the project partners as these evolved during SPEAR's lifetime.

Each of SPEAR's two communities, CoL and CoP, if they stood alone, could be considered, respectively, to be more like a traditional training programme and a best practice network. However, precisely because of the ongoing and emphasised dynamic complementarity, the two communities comprise indispensable halves of a complete, self-generating entirety, which empowers its members, on the one hand, to become effective GE practitioners in their own contexts and on their own terms, driving and sustaining GE work at their respective institutions and beyond. On the other hand, members are able to experience first-hand how diversified groups together can be more than the sum of their parts, reach intelligent decisions and creative responses to complex situations.

SPEAR's Community of Practice (CoP) comprises a number of activities centered on providing the partners with a platform for open and structured exchanges of (individual, embodied) experiences and insights gathered during the development and implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in addition to support and inspiration for practical implementation to match partners' emerging needs.

SPEAR's CoP constitutes two main structural features:

- 1) CoP-sessions during SPEAR's eight Project, Learning and Support Meetings (PLSM) – CoP-sessions consist of one longer in-person meeting (between 2 and 4 hours) on the first day of the PLSM. All present SPEAR partners participate.
- 2) Three smaller Learning and Support Clusters (LSCs), each counting three partners, meeting online with regular intervals, where the point of departure is collegiate mentoring or mutual peer supervision around practical day-to-day implementation.

This report presents three kinds of methodology applied in SPEAR's CoP:

- **'Behold this diversity'** – group exercise to develop the reflective practice of the group
- **Fostering Joint Reflection: Principles of participatory methodology applied in CoP-sessions**
- **Peer supervision / 360° mentoring in SPEAR's Learning and Support Clusters (LSCs)**

‘Wicked Problems’ and Structured Reflection

The lack of gender equality in academia is a persistent systemic issue and a notoriously complex problem. The reflective space offered by SPEAR’s CoP is designed to support partners in countering ‘wicked problems’ which they encounter in their everyday GE work. ‘Wicked problems’ are characterized by having no clear boundaries, definitions, actors or even clear objectives. They have a high degree of complexity, and no single solution can adequately and comprehensively account for or definitively address ‘wicked problems,’ as they do not originate from any one readily identifiable source, but from numerous, intertwined, complex and historic circumstances.

Part and parcel of a systemic problem of this nature are the many concrete challenges with resistance, awareness-raising, engaging people and units in order to exercise real impact, facilitate diverse work settings, afford equal opportunities, etc.

Since single solutions and focused actions cannot adequately address wicked problems, and since simplified responses have a tendency to complicate and deepen wicked problems further, collaboration and creative problem-solving involving sometimes contradictory and even conflicting perspectives in the form of deep, complex and joint reflection is absolutely essential.

Such reflection does not necessarily provide here-and-now solutions and practicable measures and interventions. Rather, the aim is to creatively develop and nourish a range of possible responses and manoeuvring space and thereby foster a deeper and more comprehensive, creative and ultimately collaborative level of engagement with complexities, problems and issues.

SPEAR’s CoP, including both the group-wide PLSM CoP-sessions and the activities in the three LSCs, is conceived to facilitate collective, structured reflection on specific conundrums, where partners mutually benefit by engaging in circular and openly exploratory exchanges of learning, practice, and feedback. Thus, SPEAR’s CoP provides a deep, vibrant and rich sounding-board to the activities and aspirations of the participants and a platform for transforming knowledge and learning into action – and for developing the individual and collective capacity for complex creative collaboration and problem solving which extends well beyond the specific interactions during CoP-activities.

SPEAR's CoP

The conditions for a well-functioning CoP include a psychologically safe timeslot where members are free to exchange and reflect on their concerns, experiences, successes and challenges and are encouraged and empowered through the active and direct engagement of their peers in symmetrical and equal interactions through structured exchanges of practice-related experiences. These interactions take place based on an understanding that members may derive inspiration and insight from each other, no matter the level and depth of their previous experience and areas of expertise.

The emphasis in CoP-interactions is explicitly on listening, reflecting and mentally 'digesting' through structured exchanges based on embodied practice-related experiences. Such joint reflective activities are not mainstream and usually receive little explicit attention – to the detriment of developing collective capacity to respond to complexities and in extension effecting lasting necessary cultural change, which is inherently complex.

It is not a given that groups are able to reflect deeply and meaningfully together, rather it is a discipline that needs to be developed, given conducive conditions and carefully tended. The core of SPEAR's CoP is therefore to provide the terms and foundation for developing the discipline of joint reflection. This is facilitated and nourished through a number of features of SPEAR's CoP:

- Sameness, repetition and rhythm of different format-elements for the CoP sessions at PLSM allow for predictability, continuity and developing the group's collective ability to focus on content, (co-)creation and collaboration rather than contextual complexities, differences and competition.
- Narrative methodology applied in exchanges and feedback during the sessions foster a high level of engagement and personal takeaways from the sessions and emphasises room for individual, lived, embodied experience and perspectives. The narrative approach applied in CoP is based on an understanding of the narrative structure of sense-making and builds on simple but powerful dialogic principles to unfold lived experiences. When this is applied recurrently and predictably, it strengthens the group's ability to act, generate, regenerate and co-create – as individuals and as a collective.
- A basic appreciative and explorative approach is applied in CoP-interactions to foster focused and relevant support and enable co-creation of forward-looking solutions and perspectives, in turn qualifying the measures and impact of the GE-work carried out in partnering organisations.
- Creative, symbolic and aesthetic elements of individual, group and plenary work, inclusion of music, artistic and playful expressions are integrated in order to generate a sense of collaborative creativity and enhance the general sense of welcome individual contributions.
- Interactions in CoP build on two basic elements: a) participants are actively invited to contribute with their specific and particular, embodied, experienced, input, and b) it is an integral part of the reflections that positions are dynamic (not static) – they can be challenged and may encompass the entire range from fixed to fluid positions and categories.

SPEAR's CoP-experiences – facilitator's reflections at the end of SPEAR

The reflective capacity does not happen by itself – and especially not a capacity to reflect as a group or collective. This needs careful structure, specific and actual issues to develop and focus and an appreciative approach to giving feedback, critique and the sharing of insights. It also requires creative expressions that do not narrow down to right/wrong responses. And crucially, it requires time - time and careful attention to establishing and building trust and mutual respect. Participative and expressive approaches and methodologies practiced at interactions and learning events are key to continually build the capacity to reflect together.

As partners became accustomed to the reflective and co-creative mode of open-ended interaction during SPEAR, so the form became more adaptive to specific needs and framework conditions. Thus, while still holding on to the basic build-up placement of the CoP session on the first day of a PLSM, the length and specific activities during the session were adapted to emergent themes and needs of the consortium. Thus, topics and questions addressed during the sessions changed according to emergent questions and topics in GEP implementation. However, the overall layout and participatory, (co-)creative and narrative approaches were applied in all sessions, just as certain structural elements such as individual reflection, narrative group reflection and closing one-word-rounds, were repeated throughout and thus served as recognizable repetition it was possible for the group to relax into.

According to feedback and testimonies during SPEAR, there has been a tangible spill-over effect of the experiences and approaches practiced during CoP-sessions into practices 'at home' – also in contexts and environments where this kind of interaction is entirely novel and unfamiliar. The practiced approaches thus went from being experienced as uncomfortably challenging and strange to being recognised as offering new ways of bringing people together and valuable perspectives out - and have since been applied in many different and surprising contexts such as teaching settings, collegial meetings and stakeholder engagement workshops. A general observation, based on the take-aways and verbal feedback from CoP-sessions, is that the kind of structured and joint reflection these sessions aimed to inspire, were challenging but ultimately rewarding and have been resonating long after the sessions themselves.

Based on partners' experiences and testimonies, it is fair to say that the intention of SPEAR's reflective activities which manifested in the project design has indeed had the power to incur deep and game-changing experiences and interactions between actors. These have allowed for differences, respected polarities and transcended conflicts and in turn provided participants with real and lasting practice and experiential knowledge of deeply creative approaches to the complexities of striving for GE in European Academia and to nourish, sustain and support communities of practice also after SPEAR.

This is in our view a strong legacy of the SPEAR-project – and something of which we are very proud. In order to sustain this legacy, we here offer the practical approaches, tools and methods for establishing, nourishing and inspiring the discipline of joint reflection.

We hope you may put these to good use. And enjoy the process all along!

'Behold this diversity'



Group exercise to develop joint reflective practice

By Eva Sophia Myers

Introduction 1/2

Overview:

Provides participants with an embodied sense of the group, starting as an icebreaker and gradually moving into stickier, more complex questions that are relevant to the groups' objectives and tasks. Ideally the exercise should end with exploring one or two significant and important perspectives that are relevant to the group – different aspects which may be important to understand and take into account both in the collaboration in the group and in the work participants will be doing 'at home'. Polarities, contradictions, plurality, differences do not need to be resolved but just merely stated and 'held', priming and training the group to enter into open exchanges and reflective, open-ended interactions.

This exercise benefits from being reiterated throughout a community's lifetime – this will strengthen, deepen and enrich the sense of collective reflective capacity

Time use: Approx 20 mins – can be applied to groups of 10-60 people.

Requirements: a large open space with room to move around.

Recommendation: use in the beginning of an event, conference, project meeting... and repeat whenever the same group meets – good as an opening activity

Two types of 'constellations': **line/continuum** and **groupings** according to different categories

- **Lines/ continua** mark a spectrum: call out the two ends and where the line goes – e.g., seniority in employment, youngest/newest at one end, oldest/most senior at the other end – make people find out where they belong by talking to each other and then place themselves along the line.
- **Groupings:** mark with a hand where the groups are to gather (corners are good) – and repeat the instruction. If no one goes to a category, that is fine. If the group calls out for additional categories, go along.

Two types of categories: **fixed and fluid**

- **Fixed categories:** factual, observable, objectively verifiable, unambiguous
- **Fluid categories:** subjective, ambiguous, negotiable, subject to change according to context, time, perspective, participants may belong to more



Introduction 2/2

Procedure:

Start out with fixed categories that provide an overview and ease participants into a more relaxed and open exchange – this serves as an icebreaker and provides participants with a valuable and embodied sense of the group and a concrete ‘the lay of the land’.

Then gradually move into and open up for the more complex exchanges with allowing for important but potentially contradictory perspectives which a group (e.g., a project consortium), both together and individually, can benefit from understanding and applying to the complex issues that they are tasked with addressing.

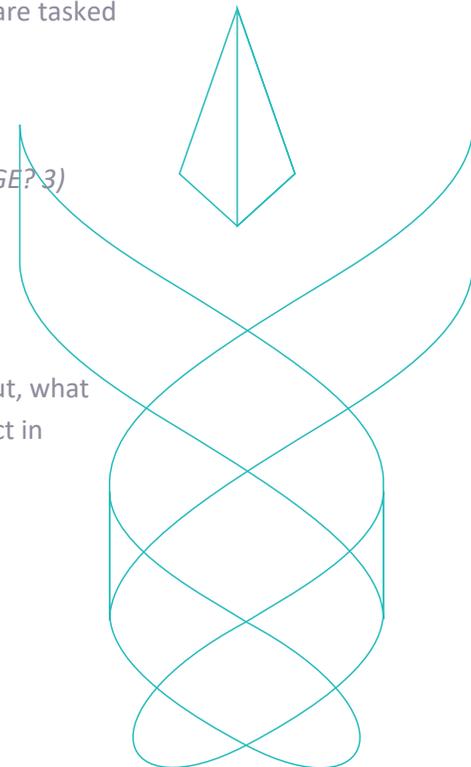
Examples of fixed categories and build up:

- 2-3 successive timelines of for instance: 1) *how long have you been employed in Academia?* 2) *How long have you been working with GE?* 3) *When did you join the project?*
- Then proceed to group constellation of for instance *countries, teams/organisations, disciplines*
- And only then move into the more fluid and complex categories

After each constellation, ask groupings or (sections of) the timeline to speak together about how this constellation strikes them – what stands out, what surprises them, what confirms what they know. reflection of a timeline-constellation can be done all together in plenary, groupings should reflect in smaller groups of 2-5 people. Make the groupings consider the landscape and their own position relative to the rest.

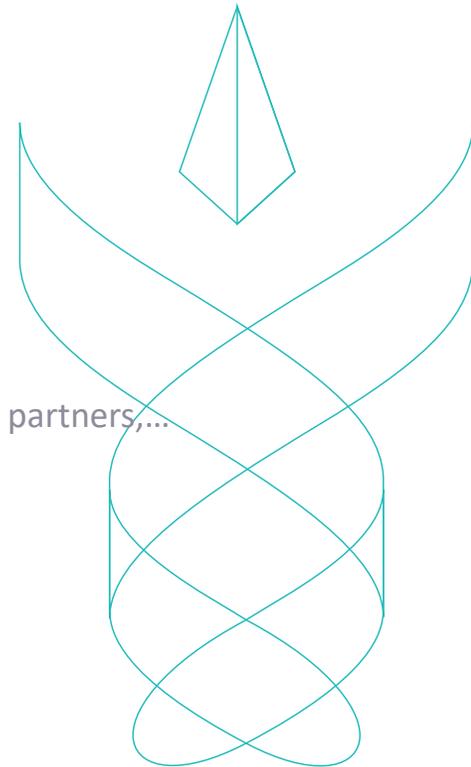
As facilitator be open to questions, suggestions, clarifications – ask people to clarify, solve, suggest ways forward. Let the discussion run a little if there is energy in the room. Allow people to be quiet, reflecting.

Please feel free to adapt to your own style 😊



Examples of constellations – fixed categories

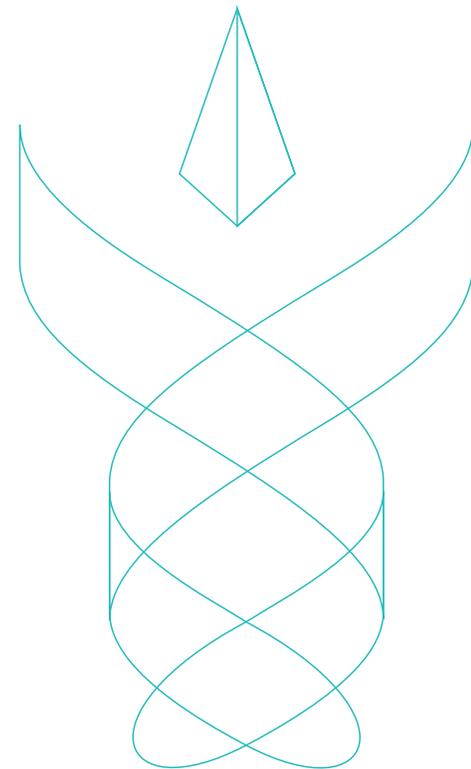
- Timelines:
 - employment in academia
 - working with GE
 - Seniority as...
 - ...?
- Groupings:
 - Country affiliation
 - Organizational affiliation
 - Nationality
 - Teams
 - In group/consortium relevant categories – e.g., different type of project members observers, technical partners,...
 - Type of position: Leader / consultant / employee / administrator / consultant / researcher / other
 - Disciplines
 - ...?



Examples of constellations – fluid categories

Groupings with gradually more fluid categories:

- Organisational position of the team: close/not close to power, powerful/less powerful team members?
- Level of GE-expertise with the following options:
 - GE as an accepted and established political and organizational agenda
 - GE as a mature and responsible force in the workplace
 - GE in the starting phases – fresh and tender and vigorous and creative
 - Any other?
- Approach/stand regarding GE (or relevant topic) with the following options:
 - Idealist (*a better world*)
 - pragmatist (*we will only succeed if we align with organization's / managements' objectives*)
 - activist (*fairness for all! Now!*)
 - rationalist (*competitive edge/business case/bottom line, improved performance*)
 - sceptic (*we have tried it all, will it ever move in earnest?*)
 - opponent (*fundamentally in disagreement*)
 - Other? (make the participants define)
- ...?

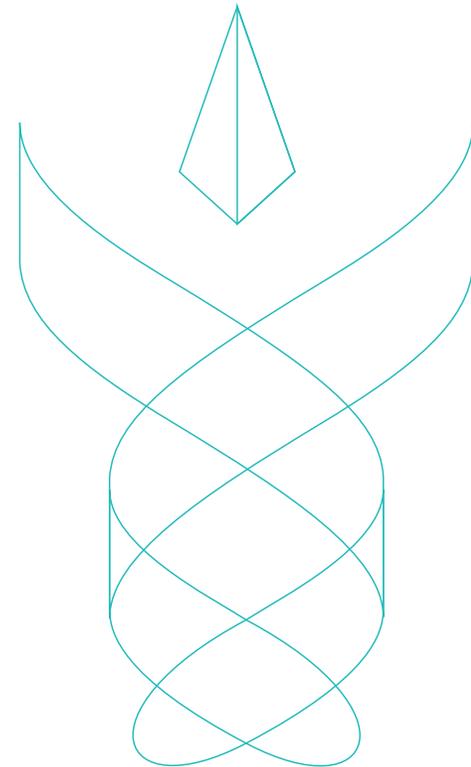


Examples of questions to ask in the constellations

Instruction: *Place yourselves according to where you feel most aligned right now – if you belong in more categories, chose one.*

Example of reflection questions for groupings in the constellations:

- *What strikes you? What is important to take note of within this constellation? Does anything surprise you?*
- *What are strengths and possible pitfalls of this perspective?*
- *How may this perspective contribute positively to the group's work?*
- *How may this grouping benefit from what the other groupings can give?*
- *What do you think the other groupings see, when they look at you?*
- *Could you have placed yourself differently?*
- *Which perspectives are missing?*



Fostering joint reflection



Principles for participatory meetings applied
in SPEAR's CoP-sessions

By Eva Sophia Myers

Core principles of participatory meetings to foster joint reflection

One's own voice: to be able to be present as oneself – questions that support this are questions that only one person can give a meaningful answer to

To be invited on one's own terms boosts one's sense of belonging

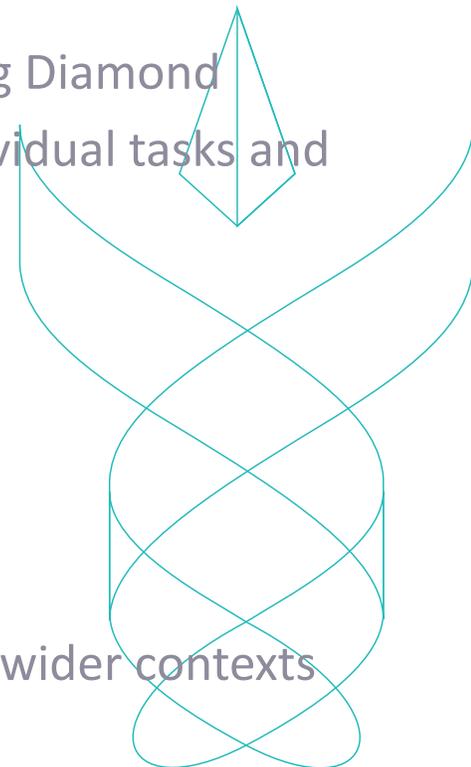
Meetings use one of the world's most precious resources: people's time. Once used, will never return. So make sure that meetings honour the time spent!

Meetings as encounters: an artform
– never perfect, always to be refined. The concept of 'Good Enough'



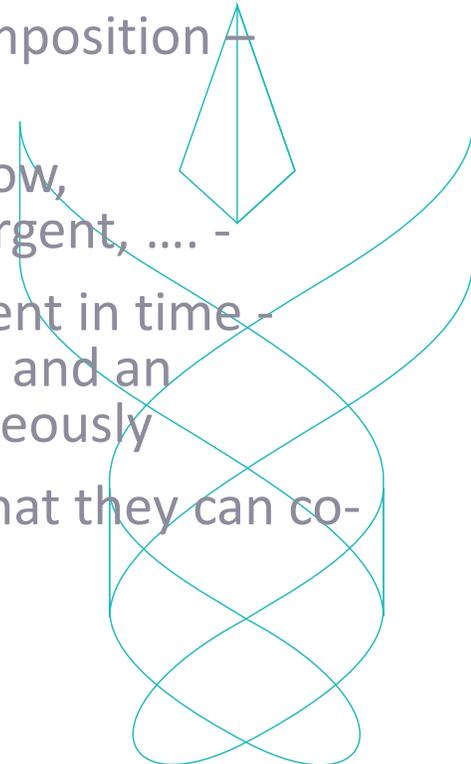
Contributing factors to conducive, creative, reflective meetings

- Setting up of the room – airy, light, spacious, welcoming, conducive for working – creative processes require freer forms, formal processes, formal set-up.
- Provide ample and nutritious energy food and drink: fruit, water, juice, coffee, cake, chocolate, nuts...
- Alignment between activities and purpose, process and pulse – The Meeting Diamond
- Variation in working-modi during meetings, e.g., reflection and writing, individual tasks and group tasks of various types
- Attention to process, temporal dynamics and transitions
- 'Subgrouping' and Differentiation/Integration
- Rounds and spirals
- Self-management, transparent turn-taking
- Repetitions, recognizable patterns, ritualized elements
- Attention to summing up together, next steps, contextualization, relating to wider contexts



More overriding approaches to meetings and the interactions that take place during and between meetings

- The group as a living entity – an in-the-world, experiential basis for individual growth
- A deep experience of one's individual expression and characteristics being equal to others' is crucial for constellating the group – an embodied sense of belonging
- Self-generating structures with their inherent composition and decomposition – integration/de-integration/differentiation/ reintegration.
- Room for polarities – stillness/activity, reflection/speaking, quick/slow, opening/closing, thinking/feeling, introvert/extrovert, intended/emergent, -
- An appreciation of the importance of the specific moment as a moment in time - that it is a segment of larger more extensive movements/processes – and an embodied exchange / exploration / exchange at many levels simultaneously
- An open and explicit interest in differences, oppositions, tensions – that they can co-exist and together might give way for a synthetic third..Nth way...-



Narrative reflection after an activity

After a presentation, discussion, activity, let the group reflect on the following four questions – first individually in writing and then open for people’s reflections in a round inviting the image and the inspiration.

A variation can be to have people write ‘letters’ with their responses to these four questions and give to the person who presented.

- **Impression:** What stands out to you in today’s CoP
- **Image:** What images, symbols, pictures, impressions come to your mind concerning this situation?
- **Resonance:** are there aspects of your own situation/context which resonate with what we have discussed here today? How?
- **Inspiration:** What do you take with you from today’s session, what will you do (differently) after today?



The Spiral Conversation



The Spiral is a conversation which is good for bringing issues (conflicts, tensions, actual or potential, ideas) to the front group. It provides a setting for exploring different perspectives of a situation and has traditionally been used for exploring factors that may inform decisions or resolutions or resolve conflicts. Decisions, however, should be made *after* the Spiral. It is inspired by a Hawaiian democratic practice called Ho'oponopono.

The Spiral could usefully be introduced and mildly facilitated by stating the following 'rules' (and gently reminding the group of them, if necessary):

Rules:

- There are several rounds clockwise – as many as is possible in the time allotted OR until everyone says 'Pass'.
- The word passes to everyone in turn. When it is one's turn each person
 - says what is on their mind about the topic.
 - addresses the present community.
 - speaks on behalf of him/herself alone – that includes decisions: if someone makes decisions, s/he only commits themselves.
- It is possible to ask questions but a direct response is not necessarily to be expected – it may or may not be given as the Spiral moves along. And may take on unexpected nuances and forms.
- There is no ping-pong to break the sequence. Everyone has to wait their turn.
- If, when it is someone's turn, s/he has nothing to say, s/he says 'pass'. S/he can speak again when it is their turn next.
- The only commitment participants have, is to say what is on one's mind – no more, no less. There is no outer requirement or expectation for anyone to pick up on what has been said already. If, however, there is an inner need, there is no such thing as redundant repetitions – if the same things are said more than once, this is amplification and can be seen as the relative weight or importance of the spoken to the people present.

Timing, beginning and ending the Spiral: The same person begins and ends the Spiral. It may be good to take two rounds and then evaluate the need to go on. Otherwise the Spiral can be timed either by allotting a set amount of time, which the mild facilitator keeps track of, or by letting the Spiral go until there is a complete round of 'pass'es' – then the topic is exhausted and it is time to move onto decision-making and action...



The Spiral Conversation – variations

Written reflection as a lead-in

- As a lead up to the Spiral it is useful to start with a 3-minute written, private reflection on the topic in this way: ‘Everyone has pen and paper. I will call out two-three questions, to which people are asked to write their immediate responses by setting pen to paper and writing continuously for the entire 3 minutes’ (a technique also called journaling...). The first question is called out and repeated. After about a minute, the second question is called out – and after about another minute, the last question is called out. Examples of questions:
 1. *What is most important/inspiring/meaningful/useful thing you learnt from XX?*
 2. *What is it about this that makes it important/inspiring/meaningful/useful?*
 3. *If you were to capture what it is that makes it important/inspiring/meaningful/useful in one word, which word would you use?*
- Introduction to this activity can be something like: “these reflections are private and has the objective to tune and focus the minds of the people present to the topic – much like the orchestra before the conductor appears on the podium”

The Socratic conversation (excellent for more philosophical inquiries) has two additional practices:

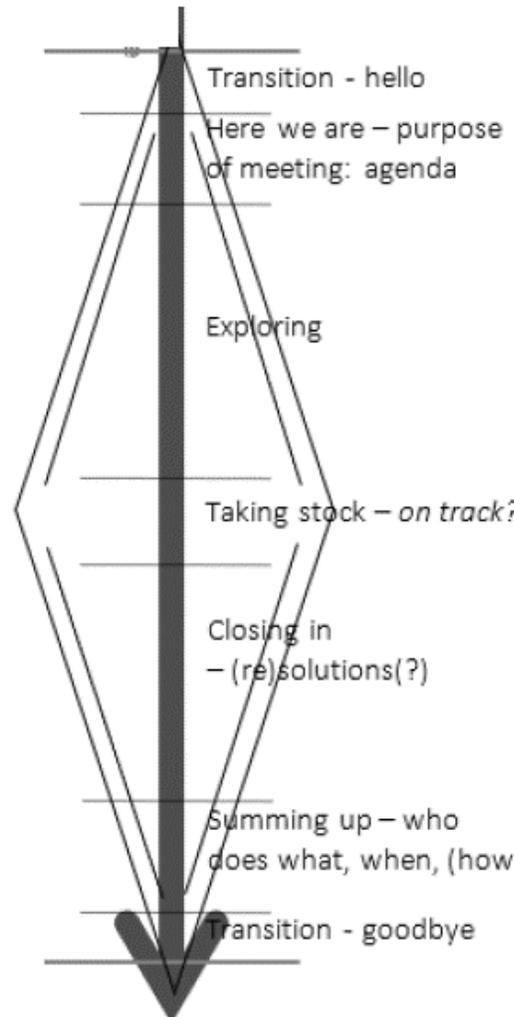
1. The order of speakers goes from the youngest person present to the oldest
2. Before the next person speaks, there is a pause for at least as long a period of time as the previous person has spoken

Meeting Principles 3/4

The Meeting Diamond



The temporal architecture of meetings



'Welcome' marks the transition from individual contexts into the joint context of the meeting. Presentation of participants invites everyone in. Iterating the agenda at the beginning is equivalent to tuning an orchestra – the same score, the same key, the same tempo

Still warming up – ensuring everyone is on board

Leveraging the expansive mood of the first half of the meeting

Midway status: staying in touch and in tune with participants and purpose

The end of the meeting is now in sight: use the momentum of closure to make decisions and conclude
Summing up, making sure that everyone agrees about the outcomes and knows the next steps

A one-word wrap-up from everyone gives a sense of completion and marks the transition from the meeting

Finish on time (or before, if possible)



The pulse of Differentiation - Integration

All systems develop by differentiating and integrating (D/I-Theory).

D/I dynamics occur at all levels--within ourselves, groups, organizations, communities, and society.

Systems survive and transform themselves by accepting, owning and integrating differences. That is, when they differentiate without excluding and integrate without forcing unity.

Differentiation: To distinguish, classify, define, separate – implying grouping like with like.

And conversely: to isolate, exclude, ostracize and segregate – implying rejecting that which is unlike.

Integration: To make one, harmonize, blend - implying unity.

And conversely: to centralize and orchestrate – implying control.

Skillful handling of D/I in groups offers a sense of aligned pulse and rhythm – and where each contribution is valued.

Subgroups form whenever differences emerge. A "functional subgroup" describes people who share *task-related* experiences, viewpoints or feelings. Subgroups may be formal and explicit or informal and hidden.

- Use groups based on similarities (role, expertise, job, department, region, etc.) when it's important to clarify or investigate different perspectives. In affinity groups people often find differences amidst similarities
- Use mixed groups to integrate where common ground is desired. In mixed groups people may find similarities amidst differences.

Adapted from Paul Lawrence & Jay Lorsch, Yvonne Agazarian, John & Joyce Weir and Marvin Weisbord & Sandra Janoff, as presented in Weisbord, Marvin & Sandra Janoff. (2007) *Don't Just Do Something, Stand There! Ten Principles for Leading Meetings that Matter*. Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco

Narrative- symbolic supervision

A method developed by eva sophia myers



Script for a 35-40 minute session – can be done with or without a facilitator, but needs to be time-managed by someone present.
This is an advanced methodology and is best practiced in a group (15-35 people) who are familiar with supervision and reflective activities.

What	How	Who	With	How long
The Open Q – the Burning Q	A quandary, dilemma, issue, theme, question, frustration, upset... Ongoing, here–n–now, personal and concrete/specific <i>Stream-of-consciousness</i>	Supervisee		5 min
Witnessing				
Private reflection	Answer Qs: What struck you in what you have just heard? What is it about it, that struck you in particular? <i>‘journaling’ – writing answers loop-to-loop as they are presented one by one</i>	Witnesses	Pen and paper	3 min
Bringing things forth	Essences from what you heard/private reflection (one at a time) <i>Spiral: keep the round, pass ok, no dialogue or ping/pong, questions ok, answers and decisions wait till after</i>	Witnesses	Flipover/board	Up to 10 min
(co-)creating a dynamic ‘snapshot’	Coming up with a picture/image collectively – draw on images, symbols, metaphors, associations, ideas, improvisation, inspirations	Witnesses	Props?	5 min
Delivery	Whichever artistic/creative expression that suits you as a group	Witnesses	Props?	3 min
Landing				
Private reflection	Answer Qs: What is meaningful in what you have just seen, heard, thought, done? What is it about it in particular, that has made this meaningful to you? Find one word that describes what is meaningful to you <i>‘journaling’ – writing answers loop-to-loop as they are presented one by one</i>	Everyone	Pen and paper	3 min
Taking it home	Interview of the supervisee: what do you take with you from this session? where and how will you use it?	Supervisee		3 min
Last words – finishing business	In order to walk away at ease and at peace does anything need to be said or done?	Everyone		3 min

Peer Supervision / 360°–mentoring



SPEAR's 'how-to'-guide for Reflective practice
in SPEAR's Learning and Support Clusters (LSCs)

Peer supervision / 360°-mentoring and reflective practice in LSCs

SPEAR's 'how-to' - guide

Contents:

- Concept of 360°-mentoring
- Setting the contract in LSCs
 - Contracting areas 1-5,
 - Examples of group contracts
 - Pitfalls in peer supervision
- 360° – Mentoring interactions – guides and how-tos:
 - How to prepare for LSC- and CoP-sessions
 - Guide to reflective questions
 - Script for LSC-virtual sessions
 - Scripts for mentoring sessions
 - The Spiral conversation
- Useful resources

Peer Supervision / 360°-Mentoring: SPEAR's 'how-to'- guide

Note on the concept

- 360°-mentoring is a concept for reciprocal mentoring between peers – also known as peer supervision or intervision, where the mentoring takes place between more than two participants who are closer to being peers than in more traditional mentor-mentee relationships
- In SPEAR, 360°-mentoring describes one of the main activities of the Learning and Support Clusters – the LSCs. All members are equal contributors in the 360°-mentoring sessions
- The 360°-mentoring in the LSCs will support SPEARs partners to obtain an enhanced understanding of our tasks, ourselves as practitioners and our contexts and ultimately to develop our competency, our capability and our capacity – and in this way become effective and efficient
- 360°-mentoring rests on experiential learning and reflection on our daily practice, the joys and challenges, the concerns, the surprises, the creative strategies, the hardships and all the rest, which we will encounter as we implement GEPs at our universities
- For this to happen we must establish and nourish a learning environment, where it is possible for participants to bring their experiences forward in open and safe exchanges
- The basic approach of 360°-mentoring is joint appreciative and explorative reflection, that may foster focused and relevant support and enable co-creation of solutions and perspectives
- This will hopefully qualify the measures and impact of our GE-work
- ... and contribute to developing our consortium into a strong and dynamic community of practice

Setting the contracts in LSCs

A background image showing a hand from the top holding a stack of four smooth, grey stones, with another hand from the bottom supporting the stack. The scene is set against a soft, out-of-focus background of a beach and ocean.

A note on the importance of careful contracting:

Careful contracting and review practices together allow for differences and expectations to be accommodated and harnessed creatively. This is especially important and useful in multicultural contexts and where tasks and contexts are complex and challenging

The recommendations presented here are based on the work of Tammy Turner, Michelle Lucas and Carol Whitaker (2018) and many years' practical experience with group supervision, both as facilitator and participant.

The following is designed to provide guidelines for LSC on how to be attentive to important aspects of group supervision from the very beginning of these four years of close interaction in SPEAR.

Paying careful attention to 1) group dynamics, 2) differences in expectations and practices, 3) meeting structure and supervisory formats and, finally 4) reflective practice both at and between sessions contributes to high quality of supervision, and ultimately the quality of members' practice.

– consider it to be a set of recommendations, a place to start, not a definitive checklist.

Enjoy the ride!

Setting the contracts in LSCs

(to be done at first meeting in LSCs at PLSM 1: establishing LSC)

There are five Contracting Areas:

1. **Practicalities**
2. **Boundaries**
3. **Working alliance**
4. **Codes and context**
5. **Review of the group's work**

Each contracting area will be unfolded in the following slides, listing points to be discussed in the LSC. This is offered as a guideline, a place to start – not an exhaustive, definitive checklist. Feel free to add, change, subtract...

These will be followed by a couple of examples of group contracts offered for inspiration and a list of some of the most common pitfalls in group supervision.

Contracting area 1: Practicalities

Discussion points

- Group members – entry and exit of members
- Frequency and length of meetings
- Venue for meetings – how to handle virtual issues (poor connection, getting used to technical setup,...)
- Managing attendance
 - Invitations (who, how, when?)
 - Cancellations/rescheduling
 - Start/finish – punctuality
- Meeting format* (guidelines given in this LSC-guide – but should be adjusted and tailored to suit the group and developed as part of SPEAR's CoP-methodology -deliverable)
- Documentation of meetings and supervision sessions:
 - Format and archiving of Logs* and other documents,
 - What is confidential only for the LSC?
 - What is confidential for SPEAR?
 - What can be made public (additional requirements?), e.g., on SPEAR website or in deliverables?
- Use of LSC-group forum on SPEAR's internal website

Contracting area 2: Boundaries

Discussion points

- What kinds of topics do I imagine bringing to LSC-mentoring sessions?
- What are you hoping LSC-mentoring will help you achieve?
- Content:
 - What is brought up in supervision – what types of issues?
 - What is **not** suitable for group / peer supervision and should be taken (up) elsewhere?
- When might we need support? And from whom? (CO, JR.,..?) How will we know and how can we take care of it?
- What happens if we find, that we feel out of our depth?

Cues: when is something *not* suitable for group supervision?

<i>Clues in the dialogue</i>	<i>Most likely territory</i>
'What's your experience of...?'	Coach/mentor
'What do you think of this...?'	Professional sounding board
I'm sorry to be taking so much time on this, I just can't seem to get past...'	Counselor
'Is it just me, or...?'	Honest friend/colleague

(adapted from Turner et al, 2018)

Contracting area 3: Working Alliance

Discussion points

- Aims and objectives of the group
- Hopes and fears
- Confidentiality
 - What do we each understand as confidential?
 - What specific information do we agree will not be circulated elsewhere?
 - How do we manage confidentiality issues?
 - What if there is a breach of confidentiality? Or we suspect that there is?
 - What is confidential to this group and not to be shared with the rest of SPEAR?
- Roles and responsibilities* in the sessions
 - Rotation of tasks, to ensure equal distribution/load/visibility
- Preparation for sessions* – type and level?
- What is reflective practice to us? What does it entail? Similarities, differences?
- Balance between support and challenge given and received in supervision

Aims and objectives – DISCUSSION POINTS

- What are we hoping to achieve? (what is in it for each of us)
– develop skills, enhance practice, recharge our energy, increase self-awareness, ...?
- How do we know if we are receiving value? On the right track?
- What options do we have if we are not achieving our objectives?

(adapted from Turner et al, 2018)

Reflective practice exploration:

- What is involved in each members reflective process?
- How often and/or how do members reflect?
- What are the differences and similarities in reflective practice of members?
- What details do members share about their self-awareness in presenting their cases?

(adapted from Turner et al, 2018)

Contracting area 4: Codes and Context

Discussion points

Ethics and ethical code– DISCUSSION POINTS

- How confident do I feel that what members share will not be shared elsewhere?
- What happens when a group member brings a case that involves another member – or similar situation?
- What happens when group members feel awkward about bringing uncomfortable issues?
- What happens when members feel awkward about an issue, another member has brought?
- What happens if a group member presents a case where it is clearly unethical (such as taking a bribe)?
- Who facilitates the process, when ethical issues divide the group?
- When is it time to stop the process in the group and ask for help? How do we know? And who do we turn to?
- What do we notice that is similar or different in our approaches? What might this mean to us as a group?

(adapted from Turner et al, 2018)

- Ethics
 - What if we see something that we consider to be unethical?
 - Who else has a stake in our work (in SPEAR, In our organizations)?
 - How will we keep connected with them?
- Contextual restrictions, requirements, contexts, that may have consequences for our work together?

Contracting area 5: Review of the group's work

Discussion points

- Review of our processes - How often and how?
- Review of our progress according to our aims and objectives – and adjustment/rewriting of our contract– how often and how?
- Assessment of the supervision techniques, formats and approaches we use – how often and how?
 - What can and should be adjusted to suit us and our needs?
 - What do we want to put forward as guides to be included in SPEAR's CoP-methodology?

General review questions:

- What works well?
- What does not work (so) well?
- What, in hindsight, would benefit from clarification?
- What are meaningful differences (in mental models, expectations, practices) that we need to be aware of and find creative solutions for in order to accommodate needs and outcomes?

(adapted from Turner et al, 2018)

Points for regular reviews

- What did I learn through our peer supervision that will impact my practice (whether as focus-person, listener, facilitator,...)
- What have we learned so far about group peer supervision? What worked well? What didn't work so well?
- How is our group developing? What is our sense of trust? What is our sense of how easy it would be to handle differences of opinion or conflict?
- How open and honest do we feel we can be right now? Has this changed in the time we have met as a group?
- Does anything in our group contract need to be adjusted?
- What kinds of cases/issues/themes have been brought up ? What is of particular value to each of us? On a scale of 1-10 how does each of us deem the value we get out of our work together to be? If there are differences, why is that so? Do we need to do something to change this?

(adapted from Turner et al, 2018)

Pitfalls in peer supervision / 360°-mentoring

- Re-opening issues or cases after mentoring sessions (e.g., when meeting is wrapping up or by someone other than the case-owner taking it up)
- Comparing or competing for who is best – showing off as an expert rather than as a reflective peer
- Introducing and overwhelming the group with background information and details
- Becoming too preoccupied by keeping a supportive atmosphere – and therefore not challenging each other
- Giving advice
- Offering false praise
- Focusing solely on problems and not on opportunities for learning, growth and solutions
- Letting equal distribution of time, tasks, attention slip, and slowly creating patterns of favoring some members over others



are we
talking
about
me
yet?

©hugh

360°-mentoring interactions – guides, scripts and how-tos:

For inspiration. To be updated as SPEAR develops

Contents:

- How to prepare for LSC- and CoP-sessions
- Guide to reflective Questions, 1 and 2
- Script for The virtual LSC-session
- Scripts for mentoring sessions
 - Peer Group Supervision/360°-mentoring
 - The Crazy-patchwork-method
- The Spiral conversation

How to prepare for LSC mentoring-sessions and CoP-sessions

Before LSC mentoring-sessions (virtual/visits) and CoP-sessions (at PLSM), each member / participant reflects on the following questions :

(Only for your own use, and for you to present orally to the extent you find it useful and necessary)

- *What have you and your team been busy with in SPEAR since we saw each other last?*
- *Of and in these activities, what has been most important?*
 - ... *most surprising?*
 - ... *most challenging?*
 - ... *most inspiring?*
- *What made it important?*
 - ... *surprising?*
 - ... *challenging?*
 - ... *inspiring?*
- *Have there been any recurrent themes, dilemmas, issues or paradoxes?*
- *Of all the above (or something else?), what stands out the most for you as a team, in a way where you would like to receive help / response / insight / input / feedback from the colleagues in the Cluster / Community?*

Qs guide 1: Empowering Questions

The purpose of empowering questions is to make the recipient think along new pathways, view his/her situation from new perspectives, in a different light and to spark new insights.

Principles:

- Open questions: How, what, where, which, who (*why can* seem accusing)
- Typically short – max 10 words
- Clearly formulated
- Gives rise to new insight, ideas, meaning and understanding
- Are posed from a genuinely curious and interested frame of mind
- Are typically oriented towards the potential and future possibilities
- Are formulated here-and-now (not premeditated)
- Has the right context and timing – works in this particular context and not necessarily in any other
- Only one person is able to respond: the recipient of the question
- The question can be *felt* (new ideas and thoughts arise)



Qs guide 2: Narrative, reflective questions

Can be posed in succession or independent of each other – feel free to improvise

- What in the challenge/situation is/was challenging for you?
- If you were to place the situation/challenge on a scale from 1 (small) to 10 (great), where would you place it in terms of significance and consequence?
- What lies within your control and influence? What lies outside?
- What are your thoughts when you are most pessimistic about your situation/challenge? What consequences might that have?
- What are your thoughts when you are most optimistic? What kinds of consequences might that have ?
- What would you like to achieve? What would be meaningful and realistic objectives?
- What have you done so far? What kinds of impact has that had?
- What are your strengths? How may you make use of them in this situation?
- What similar experiences do you have on which you may draw in this situation?
- What resources do you have yourself, and what does your wider network have? How may these resources be put to use in this situation?
- Who do you know (of) who may inspire you in this situation? How?



Virtual LCS mentoring-session of 90 minutes

Including group reflective supervision / 360°-mentoring



What	How	Who	With what	How long
Welcome and hello		SIP		5 min
Delegate tasks	Process-facilitator for session (take turns) Recorder Timekeeper			3 min
Status / insights	Where are we – what do we need help with (what kind of help)? Short statements, straight to potential issue for 360° mentoring	Everyone	Based on prep Qs*	15 min
Select cases for supervision	Out of the issues brought forward, select one cases of 40 min/ two cases of 20 min for ‘deeper’ supervision/mentoring	Everyone		5 min
360° mentoring session / group supervision	<i>1 or 2 sessions</i> <i>See scripts for different types of supervision approaches/sessions</i>			40 min
Summing up – formulating themes				
Bringing it home	Personal, written reflection: how has my issue / situation been addressed/helped today	Everyone	Pen and paper	3 min
	Short round – main points from everyone on how my issue/situation was helped today/what I take with me	Everyone		7 min
What goes into the log?	The group decides what from today’s mentoring should go into the log? What is confidential and only for the LSC, what is more public? Is there anything that should be raised in relation to WP4, CO, COAD, DST, PB, other?	Everyone		5 min
Closing	Housekeeping (next meeting, other practical issues?) Closing round (e.g. ‘one word’)	Everyone		5 min

Peer group supervision / 360°-mentoring

Script for a session of 35-40 minutes

What	How	With what	How long
Round of issues	<i>See slide on virtual LSC-session</i>		
Select case	<i>See slide on virtual LSC-session</i>		
Delegate tasks	Delegate tasks of facilitator (interviewer), timekeeper, recorder		1 min
Case presented	Interview of focus person (<i>5-10 min</i>) – issue on the table from the word go – background/context/details to be unfolded as necessary, select one issue for session – the rest of the group listens = reflective team <i>Facilitator interviews, recorder takes notes</i>		7 min
Case reflected	Interviewer then leaves focus-person to sit and listen to a conversation to take place among the rest of the group. Maintain differences of opinion – talk among yourselves, hypothesize, wonder, be puzzled, suggest ways forward, think aloud and along, talk to the air, if you were to offer help, what could it be? - leave focus person alone – what do you in particular take note of? <i>Facilitator guides and interviews</i>	Question guide* for inspiration	12 min
Case revisited	Interview of focus person again: what were you thinking while the others talked (anything goes)? (no need to acknowledge each contribution, no need to defend or excuse anything – your issue, your actions), ways forward? <i>Facilitator interviews</i>		5 min
Concluding			
	Concluding round: personal reflections by everyone		5 min
	Synthesizing themes? <i>By facilitator, group qualifies</i>		3 min
	What goes into log ? <i>Facilitator/recorder present, group qualifies</i>		5 min

The 'Crazy-patchwork' method group supervision SPEAR

Script for a session of 35-40 minutes

What	How	With what	How long
Round of issues	<i>See slide on virtual LSC-session</i>		
Select case	<i>See slide on virtual LSC-session</i>		
Delegate tasks	Delegate tasks of facilitator, timekeeper, recorder		1 min
Case explored			
Case presented	Focus-person (FP) presents case – go straight to what the challenge/issue is, and what kind of help you want – details will unfold <i>Facilitator interviews, recorder takes notes</i>		4 min
Case explored	Listeners ask clarifying questions, that may enhance the understanding of the situation. Use Question guide for inspiration <i>Facilitator may interview listeners, recorder takes notes</i>	Question Guide	8 min
Case reflected			
	3 min. Reflective break: listeners consider what they have heard, seen, experienced. Which themes, questions, pictures, emotions, reactions emerge? – <i>everybody writes reflections down.</i>	Pen and paper	3 min
	Listeners present their reflections to FP. It is a good idea to start these reflections with "It is as if..." to emphasize that they are offered as open and hypothetical. Strive to offer something that has not been said – embrace differences in these reflections, and invite other perspectives in (emotional, fanciful, nerdy...) <i>Facilitator may need to remind people of staying open. Recorder takes notes</i>		8 min
Case revisited	FP reflects on case in the light of feedback. Any new insights, surprises, affirmations, other?		2 min
Possible actions – crazy patchwork	Everyone (incl FP) produces 3-5 ideas on how to handle the challenge – and writes them on post its – one idea per post it. Ideas are then presented to FP one at a time and placed as a collage of possible actions in front of FP (in a virtual setting, this may be done as a shared document in the LSCs forum)	Post its, pens, A3-paper	8 min
	FP selects three actions that stand out to him/her and which s/he might act on		2 min
Concluding	A short round – everyone says one word to close the session		2 min

Useful resources 1/2

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Useful resources 2/2

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Links about the conflict resolution practice of ho'oponopono:

<http://www2.hawaii.edu/~barkai/HO/Hooponopono.pdf>;

<http://www.ecr.gov/Resources/NativeNetwork/NetworkGlossary.aspx?cat=nn>



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