DILEMMA CONSULTANCY PROTOCOL

NORMS:
● Be hard on the content, soft on the people
● Be kind, helpful and specific
● Share the air (or "step up, step back")
● Have generosity of spirit (assume people are trying their best, have good intentions, and are open to learning to do better)

PROTOCOL:
(27 min total)

1. **Overview** (3 min) - Presenter gives an overview of the dilemma and frames a dilemma question for the group to consider. They might include:
   ● **School / System Overview:** information about the size, culture, mission, and attitudes of the school community. Systems are designed to produce the results they currently produce: what in the design produces this dilemma?
   ● **Dilemma Overview:** what is the dilemma? who is affected? to what extent?
   ● Any other relevant info.

2. **Clarifying & Probing Questions** (8 min) – Collaborators ask clarifying questions (which have brief, factual answers and are intended to help the group develop a deeper understanding of the dilemma; e.g., "How many times a week does the entire faculty meet?") and probing questions (which help the presenter expand his/her thinking about the dilemma; e.g., "How do students currently know they are safe being 'out' in your school?"). Questions **should not be “advice in disguise,”** such as “Have you considered...?”

Potential Question Bank:
- What, if any, are the stated or implied mindsets or beliefs of faculty and administration at your school toward the LGBTQ+ community?
- How do students currently know they are safe being 'out' in your school?
- Are there currently students who are out of the closet at your school, to your knowledge?
- Do you have a hunch about how you might handle your dilemma?
- How many students are in your school community? Faculty members?
- How is your school's schedule organized?
- How is your school's physical space organized?
- What are bright spots: where, if anywhere, is LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum being incorporated? Where are students' identities being surfaced and validated within or alongside academic work?
- Who are your allies at your school? How do you know?
- What data do you have that kids do or don't feel belonging at your school currently? Think about attendance, "discipline" issues, stated or implied opinions, motivation in project work, attitudes toward school, etc.
- Think of a time that faculty at your school has made a successful change in their practice. How was the change introduced and facilitated?
3. **Discussion** (10 min) - The presenter reframes the question if necessary and then physically removes themselves from the group. The presenter is not allowed to speak during the discussion, but should listen and take notes. *Resist the urge to speak directly to the presenter.* The group *discusses the dilemma* and attempts to provide insight on the question raised by the presenter.
- **Positive feedback:** Begin with warm feedback, such as, "What strengths do we see in the presenter’s thinking?"
- **Opportunities for growth:** Next, the group takes a more critical look at the dilemma, using the question posed by the presenter to frame the discussion. For example, "What isn’t the presenter considering?" or, "I wonder what would happen if . . . "

4. **Response** (3 min) – The presenter has the opportunity to respond to the discussion. It is not necessary to respond point by point to what others said. The presenter may share what struck them and what next steps might be taken as a result of the ideas generated by the discussion.

5. **Closing the Loop** (3 min) – Participants have the opportunity to each share one “take away” from the discussion or something they will bring back to their own practice.

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**Tips for Facilitation:**

- **Keep dilemma focus question at the center of the conversation:** Write the question down so that it is visible during the entire conversation and feel empowered to remind participants of it at points during the discussion.
- **Stick to the time for each section:** use a timer to keep track of time or ask a volunteer to help.
- **Don’t be afraid to keep the group focused on the protocol:** if someone gives advice in disguise, gently ask the participant to write it down and wait until you have moved on to that point in the conversation.
- **Redirect the conversation when necessary (without unnecessarily monopolizing airtime):** if the discussion jumps straight into responding to the dilemma question before sharing positive feedback, make sure to take time to celebrate the thinking or work first.
- **Be courageous and confident:** strong facilitation is the key to having successful dialogue about our work and is appreciated by everyone in the group. If it helps to literally read each step to the group, by all means do so. And remember to "take the reins" or full ownership of your important role as facilitator.