

Overview on Peer Exchange

What is “peer exchange”?

Peer exchange is an approach to group learning that relies on facilitated dialogue among peers or participants. For the purposes of an exchange, efforts are made to ensure that no participant assumes a position of privilege or power that is higher or lower than another. Some of the factors that distinguish peer exchange include:

- Creation of “safe space” or a comfortable environment that allows for candid, non-threatening dialogue in a small group setting (10-15 people)
- Recognition and valuing of existing or indigenous knowledge
- Involvement of participants in the designing of the exchange
- Recognition that participation in a peer exchange is itself a skill
- Recognition of confidentiality (where requested)
- Willingness to participate as genuine peers
- Willingness to actively engage in dialogue and share knowledge
- Willingness to build trust and rapport

How can peer exchange be utilized?

Peer exchange can be a useful approach to group learning for many different purposes. Some examples include:

- Training and skills building
- Feedback collection
- Problem solving
- Conflict resolution
- Visioning
- Identification of collective benefits
- Coaching among peers

How can peer exchange be supported?

Peer exchange is most effective when carefully designed and implemented. Some factors to consider include the following:

- Facilitation that allows for broad participation
- Identification of clear ground rules or group agreements
- Compilation (in writing) of highlights or key points
- Identification of next steps
- Continuity between meetings or gatherings



Elements of Peer Exchange

- Surfacing key issues and challenges.
- Sharing perspective and problem solving.
- Supporting peers as resources and through ongoing connections.

