

PROCESSES



Hard Questions

Purpose:

To discuss potentially contentious topics of wellness in the school community, generate discussion around areas of a future policy or action plan that needs discussion, and to safely allow all participants to express opinions.

Materials:

- Flip chart paper and markers.
- Hard questions and statements (See pre-process for instructions)

Time for Process:

Approximately 30 minutes, depending on number of statements.

Pre-process Steps:

1. Think of the hard questions or statements that match the discussion needs of your group and write each statement on one piece of flip chart paper. Some examples of hard questions or statements may include:
 - a. Do as I say, not as I do.
 - b. I can get my students to behave and perform well academically when I use candy as a reward.
 - c. What's the harm in a little treat?
 - d. Academics are more important than physical fitness.
 - e. Let's make the healthy choice the easy choice.
 - f. Why does our school need to change?
 - g. The students get so excited when we have McDonalds for hot lunch.
 - h. Chocolate bar sales are a great way to make fast money in a school.
 - i. Why does there need to be healthy food in the staff room?
2. Spread the chart papers around the room with enough space between each page to allow a group to gather around each page.

Process:

1. Ask participants to form groups of 3-6. You may want to pre-determine the groups to vary expertise in each grouping.
2. Assign each group to one of the statements posted around the room. Have all participants in each group write their personal reaction to the statement or question answer to the question on the flipchart paper.

- It is important that answers are recorded in a non-verbal format, so everyone's voice is equal.
3. After everyone has written their remarks, take a few minutes for discussion so people can explain their response or reflect on what they are seeing.
 4. After 3-5 minutes, ask the group to circulate to the next statement. Repeat the process until all participants had time with each statement.
 5. Ask each group to circulate around the room and read all the responses to each statement.

Next Steps:

1. Collect all questions and statements and write people's responses verbatim in a word document. You will find some statements have great consensus, while others seem to have a clear discord.

2. Meet with the school administrator to determine the next steps on which questions need further discussion as a school community.

Those with many differing opinions usually require further discussion. The responses can also help form the basis for any wellness policy your school may be developing, as there are usually many statements that already garner support from the vast majority of members, and it is easy to see that the outlying opinions are in the minority, e.g., only one staff member in support of candy as a reward.