



## GETTING STARTED

# Meeting Roles and Structure

One of the most effective forms of professional development occurs when educators join together at their own school to discuss a book that can help them develop their practice. When we join a book-study group, we suddenly have more than just a book to read. Now we have to both understand the book and be able to share some of that understanding with others. The extra thrust of shared, interactive learning helps us to read and reflect more deeply and purposefully. Mutual support, interactive analysis, and planning for implementation with peers encourage effective professional development. A well structured book study allows adult learners to do some self-directing, to draw from their own experience, to use their expertise to solve problems, and to gain access to outside expertise, so they are more able and likely to attain their goals.

The *Developmental Designs* teaching approach that underlies *The Advisory Book* identifies productive social interaction as critical to learning for both youth and adults. The approach aligns with research that measures gains in teacher competence from engaging in discourse—interaction that opens up questions and builds understanding. (Tharp, R., & R. Gallimore. 1988. *Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning, and schooling in a social context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)

## Learning together

In the study group for *The Advisory Book*, you will learn from your colleagues' experiences and their understanding of the text, and they from yours. Listening to others' interpretations, you will gain perspective on your own ideas, as well as a broader, richer body of information about the structure and content of effective advisories. You will build an interconnected community of educators as you exchange analogies, comparisons, inferences, and reactions to the text, and solve the problems that advisories may present to your school or to individuals. Your conversations will help create the context for a successful community-building advisory structure for your school.

## Practicing the meeting structures

In the nine meetings of your study together, you will have opportunities to practice components of the Circle of Power and Respect (CPR) and Activity Plus (A+) advisory meeting structures. Having direct experience with daily news messages and trying out a variety of greetings, reflection questions, and discussion formats will bring the structures alive and provide opportunities to identify and resolve problems. Direct experience of the sharing component of CPR is particularly valuable, because you will practice the process of gradually building the elements of good conversation and will be prepared to introduce that process to your students.

The appendices of this guide include descriptions of the discussion and small-group formats that you will be using; *The Advisory Book* provides thorough descriptions of greetings, shares, and reflection questions.

## Getting Started

### Assignment of roles

The group needs to decide who will do certain jobs for the group. Will one person be designated as the facilitator of all of the sessions, or will the leadership role rotate? Perhaps two participants could share the role. Whether leadership is shared or the role of a single person, someone needs to be responsible for establishing and maintaining the structure of the process.

### Schedule of meetings

The nine sessions generally occur in consecutive weeks, but you may choose to extend the process to as much as twelve weeks. Use the schedule grid on page 11 to plan dates and leaders for the meetings.

If you have purchased *The Circle of Power and Respect* DVD, it's a good idea to view the recording before Meeting One or before you begin to discuss CPR in Meeting Two. Then you will have a visual/auditory experience of middle-level students engaged in a meeting as a basis for discussing the structure of CPR.

It will add to your understanding to watch for the following:

1. Four components: Identify the greeting, sharing, activity, and daily news components.
2. Adolescent needs: Looks for ways that the CPR experience meets adolescents' needs for autonomy, competence, relationship, and fun.
3. Social skills: Look for examples in student behavior of cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
4. Participation: Notice whether all students are actively participating in each of the meeting components.

You may divide into four groups and have each group watch for one of these four aspects of the meeting.

## Meeting formats

Sit in a circle for the study sessions. Over the nine sessions, you will experience the CPR and A+ components of greeting, sharing, extended activities, and reflection, and a variety of small-group discussion formats. See pages 76-77 for descriptions of the small-group formats.

## PARTICIPANT ROLE

### Meeting Preparation



You will use the graphic organizers and questions included in the chapters to interact with the text while you are reading. These tools help you analyze, compare, apply, and evaluate the text in the context of previous reading and your own classroom experience. You will bring the results of your interactions with the text to the next study group meeting.

In addition to the structured interactions, you may also choose to:

- Make notes in the margins or in the Notes space provided about the text or to connect with other ideas and resources
- Underline or highlight particularly salient passages to share with others
- Outline a chapter or section
- Use a set of symbols to indicate reactions, connections, comparisons, and patterns in sections of reading
- Keep a log or journal about the book.

Structured interactions with the text give you signposts to return to when preparing for and participating in the group discussion.

## Meeting

### Create and follow meeting guidelines

You will participate in creating rules to guide your work as a group. Each meeting begins with a brief check-in on the health of the group and the members' adherence to the guidelines.

### Participate in community building

Each meeting presents opportunity to greet one another, share about yourself and your ideas, and participate in discussion activities.

### Cite the text

Be ready to cite page numbers and paragraphs to support your text-referenced

comments; this allows other participants to see the book's language for themselves. Citing the text strengthens one's case, clarifies ambiguities, and provides context for responses and subsequent conversations.

## Listen and respond

After a group member shares his or her thinking, others in the group respond to what has been shared, as opposed to listening without comment and then moving on to the next person's thoughts. Without active responses to ideas, discussions can become dull or perfunctory.

## Reflect

The format for reflection varies, but quick formats include:

- **Partner or triad shares:** Two or three participants discuss a memorable element of content of the session.
- **Written reflection:** Participants write comments and questions in the Notes sections provided in their books.
- **Share out:** Several people share with the larger group what they have discussed with a partner or written individually, so the whole group gets to hear some of the individual reflections.
- **Respond visually:** By showing thumbs up, sideways, or down, participants can indicate whether a discussion stimulated new insights, questions, opportunities for commitments, etc. They can also use their bodies to show their responses by standing on or near a "target." Mark the center of the target on the floor with a piece of paper, close to where those with the most positive response stand, and those less certain or less positive responses stand farther away from the center.



## LEADER ROLE

### Meeting Preparation

Successful book study meetings require that everyone read and fully explore the assigned material. The leader can help facilitate this in the following ways.

#### Review and prepare for meeting format

Read Leader Instructions to understand meeting and discussion formats. Gather materials. Prepare the daily news message. Create a circle of chairs, one for each participant.

#### Provide reminders

Remind participants of the upcoming meeting dates and times on a regular basis, in a variety of ways, as appropriate: reminders at staff meetings, internal news bulletins, e-mail, the school's intercom system. For the first meeting, communicate the assigned reading to the group at least two weeks in advance.

### Meeting

#### Gather in a circle

#### Create and post meeting guidelines

In the first meeting, participants review a suggested list of guidelines (see below), narrow them down to three or four, amend as necessary, and approve them, preferably by consensus. For subsequent meetings, post the approved rules.

#### Suggest meeting guidelines

- Come prepared—read and interact with the text in the manner requested before the meeting.
- Listen carefully.
- Keep an open mind.
- Speak clearly and thoughtfully.
- Participate, but don't dominate or consistently "pass."
- Presume positive intentions in others.
- Only respectful disagreements are welcome.
- Meet your needs, but not at the expense of others.

#### Guide the meeting format

Gather everyone together at the appointed time and lead the group through the meeting format, the core of which is the small-group discussion.

## Meeting format overview

Each study session uses components from the Circle of Power and Respect and Activity Plus advisory structures as well as other strategies to create a rich professional development experience:

- **Daily news:** At each meeting, the leader will provide a daily news message that introduces the session, helps the group gather useful data, and models the use of daily news charts as described in *The Advisory Book*.
- **Introduction of meeting topic:** Specific language is provided in the Leader Instructions.
- **Greeting:** Each session begins with a greeting.
- **Sharing:** Sharing is based on the reading for the session.
- **Small-group discussion:** Chapter discussions take place in the form of an adult learner activity. These are varied from chapter to chapter.
- **Reflecting:** At the conclusion of the small-group discussion, the whole group reassembles to share what was learned.
- **Follow-up and planning:** The whole group considers follow-up suggestions and the assignment for the next meeting.

### Daily news

The daily news imparts information about the session and gathers information from participants; it models ways teachers can use daily news with their students.

### Greeting

The greeting process strengthens community and models the greeting structure of CPR and A+ advisory formats. A description of each session's greeting is included here, as well as in *The Advisory Book*.

### Sharing

When participants share from their life experiences, they strengthen the adult community and practice teaching the art of conversation to their students. For quality sharing, students need to learn, step by step, how to:

- Select sharing topics
- Speak on a topic
- Ask open-ended questions of the sharer
- Make friendly comments to the sharer
- Try different share formats.

As an alternative to the in-depth exploration of sharing formats provided in this guide, the leader may select sharing formats from *The Advisory Book* and provide a topic for each session.

### **Guide the small-group discussion format**

Lead participants through the small-group discussion format using the detailed description provided for each meeting. Small groups may be formed simply (e.g. Count Off) or playfully (e.g. Screaming Eyes). See Appendix C, page 76, for quick ways to form small groups and descriptions of small-group discussion formats used in the meetings.

### **Guide reflection**

At the end of the small-group discussions, there is time for the whole group to assemble and share the thinking of the smaller groups. Participants may reflect on the relevance of what they have discussed to their future practice and perhaps plan implementation.

### **Suggest follow-up implementation**

As a group or as individuals, you may decide to try advisory structures and strategies with students or staff members. Possible follow-up strategies are provided for each meeting.

### **Optional**

If you have not already viewed *The Circle of Power and Respect Advisory Meeting* DVD, you may choose to view it now or at another opportunity before Meeting Two. The recording is about 20 minutes in length. It will provide you with a visual/auditory experience that will clarify your reading and discussion of CPR. At any time in Meetings Two through Six about the four components of CPR you may choose to view a component in the recording again, as a reminder.

### **Prepare participants for the next meeting**

Announce the next meeting date. Direct participants to the next meeting's introduction and Reading Assignment section. Structured interactions with the text are provided for each reading.

# Meeting and Leader schedule

SESSION	DATE	TOPIC	LEADER
1		An Argument for Advisory	
2		CPR: Overview, Daily News, Circling up	
3		CPR: Greeting	
4		CPR: Sharing	
5		CPR: Activity	
6		CPR: Daily News Processing, Student-led CPR	
7		Activity Plus	
8		Planning Advisories	
9		Assessing Social Skill Development	