



Course Handout: Involving People in Decisions that Impact Them

The City of Madison's [Service Promise](#) includes these commitments:

- Listen actively and communicate clearly
- Involve those who are impacted before making decisions
- Collaborate with others to learn, improve, and solve problems.
- Treat everyone as they would like to be treated.

Preparing for Stakeholder Engagement

What is a stakeholder?

A stakeholder is anyone who is affected by or who has an affect on something. Throughout this course, we'll assume that "something" is a decision.

Practice: Finding the stakeholders

You manage a facility that's open to the public, but doesn't get many visitors. One morning you have a voicemail from a customer. They had a question and tried to visit your facility, but arrived just after it closed at 4 pm. The message was a long rant about how ridiculous your hours are for people who work during the day. You wonder whether you should change the hours that you're open to the public.

Who are the stakeholders in this decision?



Framing the decision

- What are the decision points?
- Are there any non-negotiables?
- Who makes the decision(s) and how?

Choosing one or more decision styles

This illustration represents four decision styles:



- **Independent:** You make the decision on your own.
- **Consultative:** You ask others for input, but you make the decision.
- **Group:** You bring the decision to a group, and through a group process a decision is made. Everyone in the group has equal voice, including you. (If your voice is more important, the decision is consultative and not a group decision.)
- **Delegating:** You pass the decision to someone else, whether an individual or group. They may include you (or not) in the decision making process. You commit to supporting whatever they decide.

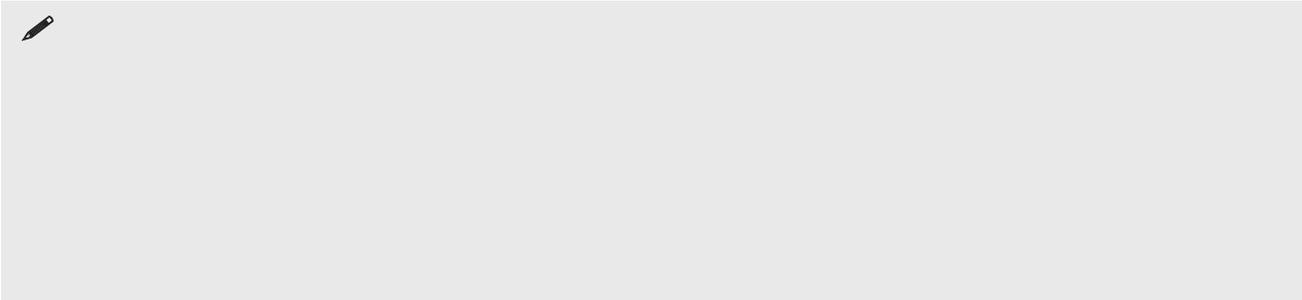
Breakout group instructions

1. Introduce yourselves to each other
2. Choose a notetaker/ spokesperson
3. Your Breakout Group is assigned to **one** decision style.
4. Discuss the pros/cons of your decision style

Notes



Why should we involve stakeholders?

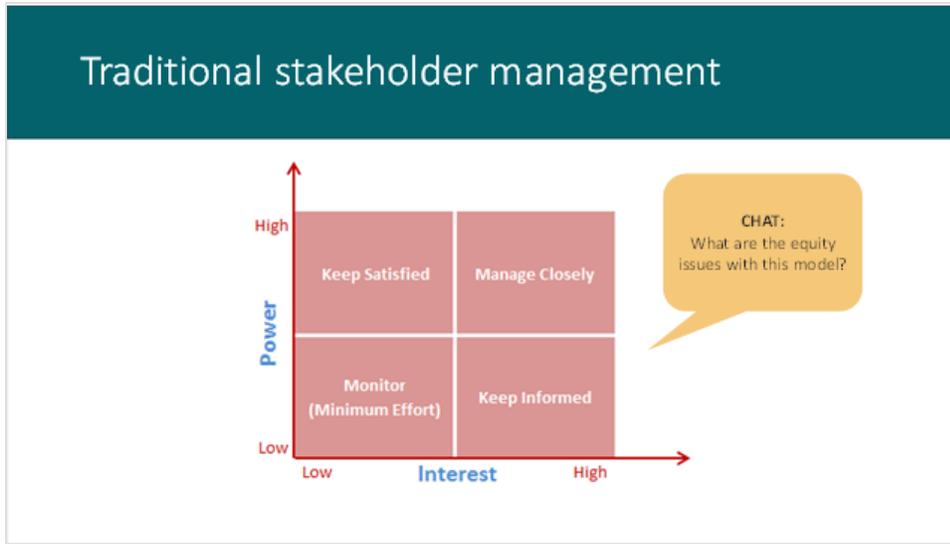


Not all stakeholders are impacted equally

The diagram illustrates the hierarchy of stakeholder impact. It consists of three concentric circles. The innermost circle is labeled 'Neighbors', the middle circle is labeled 'Consumers', and the outermost circle is labeled 'Ratepayers'. To the right of this diagram is a photograph of a water treatment plant, showing several large blue cylindrical tanks and associated piping.

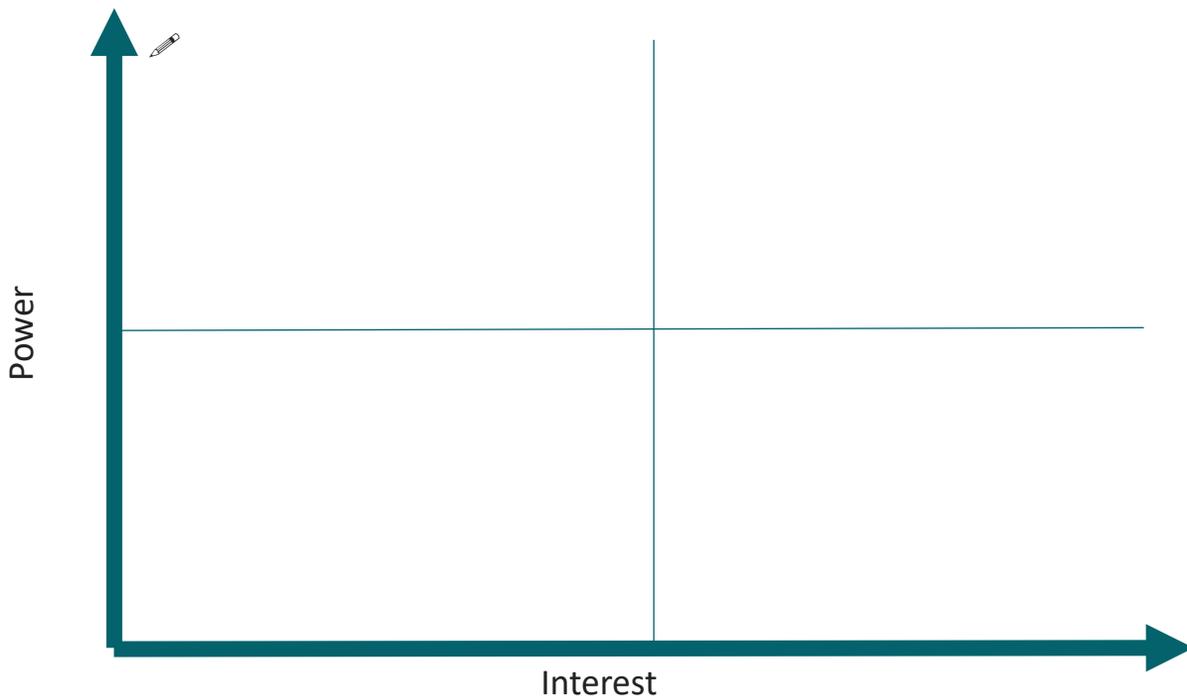
Or equally situated

The diagram illustrates the relationship between power and resources. A large blue arrow points downwards and is labeled 'Power'. A large blue arrow points upwards and is labeled 'Connections Time Knowledge'. A diagonal line runs from the bottom-left to the top-right, separating the two arrows. On the left side of this line, there is an orange circle containing the text 'Excluded Completely'.



What are the potential equity issues with traditional stakeholder “management”?

What might your stakeholder *engagement* process look like?



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Considerations for equitable engagement

- **Demographics-** Proactively analyze and collect demographic data
- **Power dynamics-** Be mindful of existing dynamics and how you communicate
- **Voice/ choice-** Who has the most voice and choice? Any barriers to participation?
- **Who has the most to gain/lose?**
- **What are the cumulative impacts?** (Example: rate and fee increases)

Empathy Mapping

Empathy mapping is a perspective-taking tool. We tend to put ourselves in someone else's shoes instead of listening to understand how they feel in their own shoes.

Ways to use Empathy mapping

- Individual reflection
- As part of a group discussion using a whiteboard or easel pad
- To develop questions and organize notes from stakeholder interviews and focus groups
- To maintain focus on key stakeholders by revisiting and updating map regularly

Practice

- Download this [fillable empathy map](#).
- We'll watch a short video clip together during the course
- Fill in your empathy map. You don't need to get to all the questions.

Additional Resources

- [RESJI Public Participation Guide](#)
Developed by the City of Madison's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative.
- [Guide to developing Community Agreements](#)
This guide from the [National Equity Project](#) was developed for educators but works with any kind of team or group.
- [The 4 Decision Styles: When to Involve Others in Decisions](#)
Article by Jessie Lyn Stoner with the Seapoint Center for Leadership presents pros/cons of each decision style and questions that can help you determine which style to use.
- [Empathy map](#)
This is the handout we used in the empathy mapping exercise.
- [Liberating Structures](#)
Group facilitation strategies that are relatively easy to learn and implement.

You can also [contact Amy Deming](#), the course instructor, with any follow-up questions.

Thank you for attending this course! Please don't forget to [give us your feedback](#).