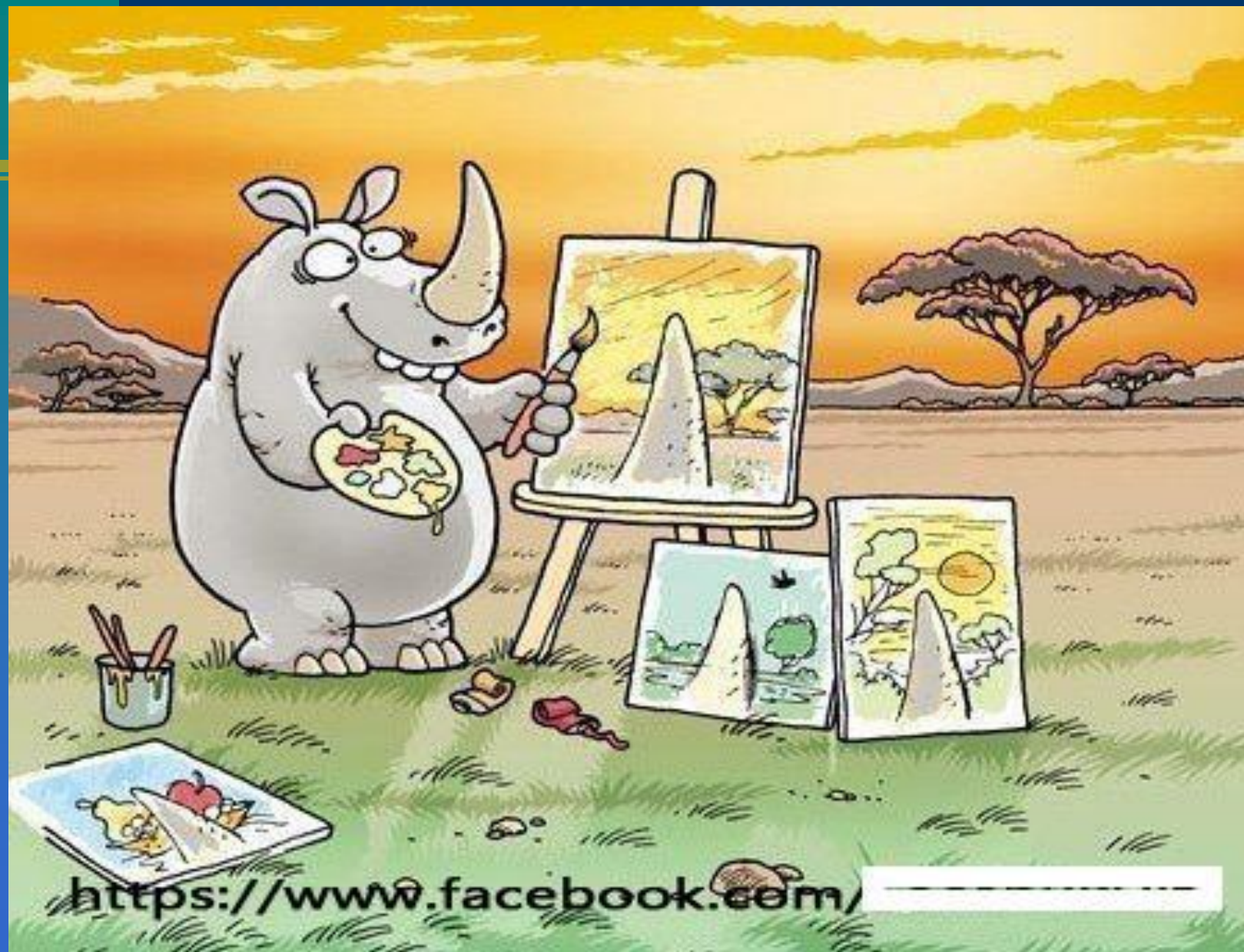




Public Conversations Project

Hold the Tomatoes, Please: Designing Effective Constituent Meetings

Dave Joseph
National Conference of State Legislatures
August 25, 2015



<https://www.facebook.com/>

Workshop Goals

- Achieve clarity of purpose and set participants' expectations
- Recognize the value of pre-meeting preparation and design
- Construct safe-enough space for open-hearted engagement
- Share ideas and strategies for dealing with challenging moments

Definition of “dialogue”

- Primary purpose is:
 - ❖ Learning and understanding more about each other
 - ❖ Building and deepening trust and relationships
 - ❖ Strengthening a sense of community in the face of threat
 - ❖ Laying the foundation for possible collaboration

- Primary purpose is not:
 - ❖ Persuading or convincing the other person
 - ❖ Raising consciousness
 - ❖ Mediation, negotiation or conflict resolution

Waterline of Visibility



Source: Brook Graham
chicostateblog.wordpress.com

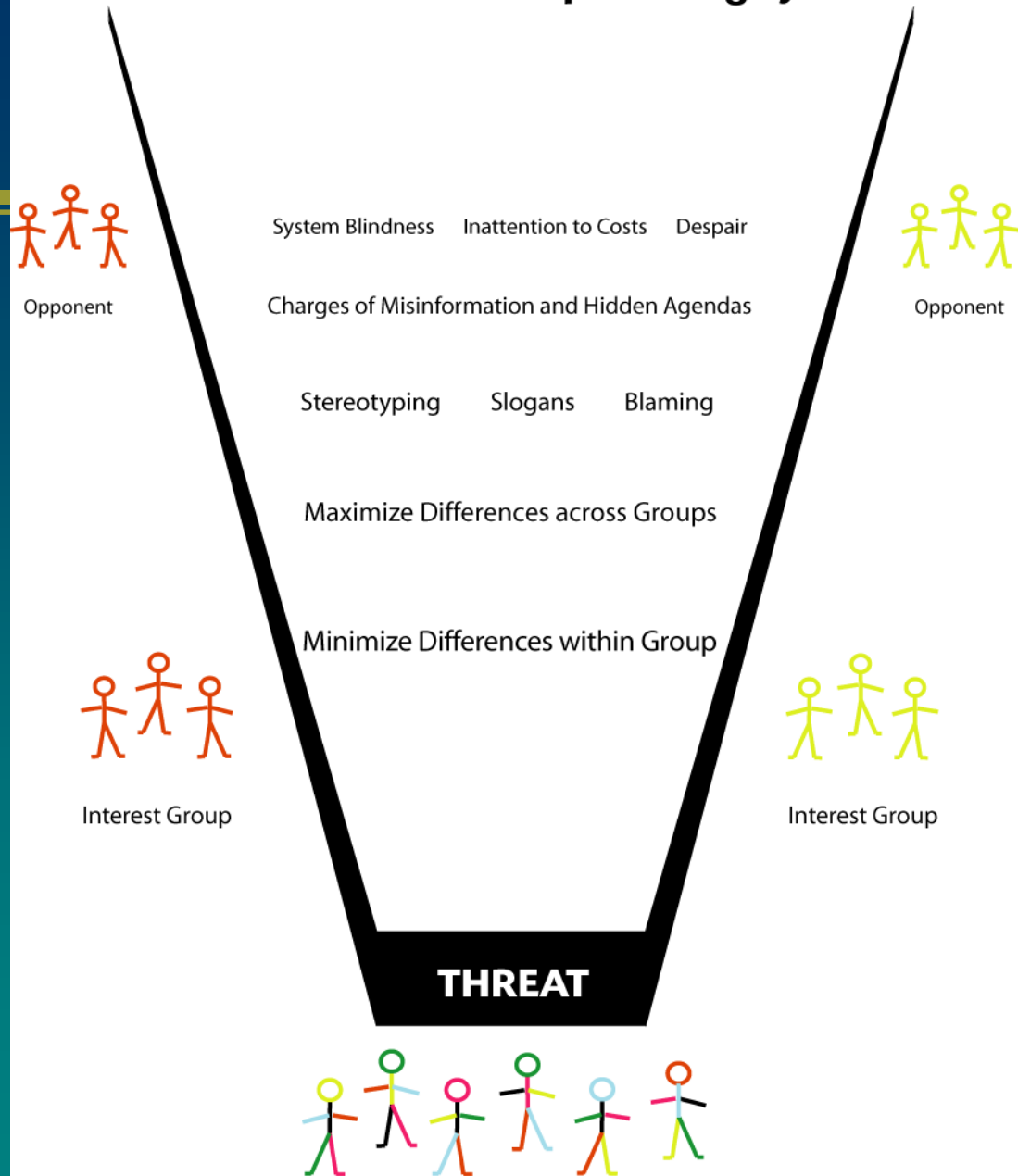
Proposed Agreements

- Pass
- Thoughtful speaking
- No interruptions
- “Step up and step back”
- Seek to understand
- Check out assumptions
- Speak for ourselves
- Non-attribution + confidentiality upon request

Emotional Hijacking

- Selective attention
- Arousal and hyper-vigilance
- Triggering and attack-counterattack

Polarization: A Self-Perpetuating System

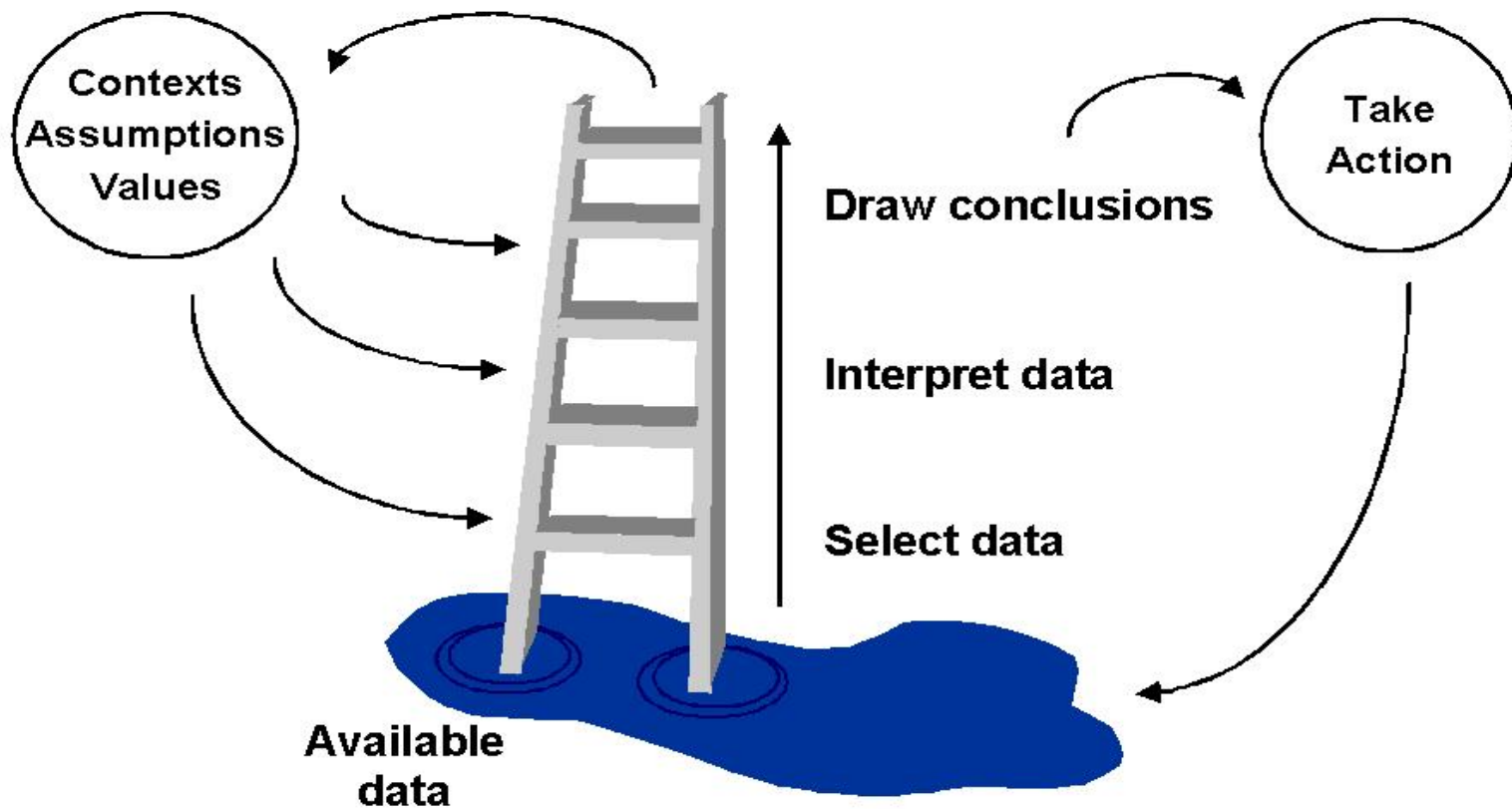


Varied experiences, beliefs, identities, hopes

Varied and flexible bonds of affiliation



The Ladder of Inference



Our Approach

- “Every system is perfectly designed to produce the results it gets” --- W. E. Deming
 - ❖ Purpose, purpose, purpose!
 - ❖ Avoid what hasn’t worked
 - ❖ Build on existing strengths
- Avoid “emotional hijacking” / “lizard-brain”
 - ❖ Anticipate concerns and plan ahead
 - ❖ Promote clarity of purpose and roles
 - ❖ Food? Seating? Reflection? Agreements?

Tips

- Cut off?
- Misunderstood?
- Misheard?
- Disrespected?
- Angry?
- Confused?
- Uncomfortable with the process?
- Off-track?