

The “Problem of Practice” Protocol

This protocol supports colleagues in sharing specific ideas and feedback. The protocol may take anywhere from 30-40 minutes.

You will need: A timekeeper to keep the group on-schedule, a recorder to take notes for the group and a facilitator who helps keep the group’s discussions on-point

STEP	Action/Process	Support Notes
Step 1 2 min	Overview of the process/ground rules/times for process steps	
Step 2 4-5 min	One group member presents by sharing a challenge/problem with enough contextual information to allow audience to understand the issue at hand.	
Step 3 4-5 min	Critical friends ask questions for clarification .	Facilitator: Clarifying Questions are simple questions of fact to clarify the dilemma.
Step 4 2 min	Critical friends silently consider what they’ve heard and what they might offer as a suggestion.	
Step 5 2 min	Critical friends share suggestions with an elbow partner.	
Step 6 4-5 min	Critical friends talk to each other and offer suggestions, recommend strategies, etc. as presenter takes notes.	Facilitator: It may be useful to use a “whip” format that starts clockwise from the presenter, each person sharing only one thing on a turn.
Step 7 3-5 min	The Presenter reflects on the comments and identifies probably next steps.	
Step 8 6 min	Critical friends identify something they heard which they may use to improve their practice. Then they share with the group.	Timekeeper: 2-3 min to reflect silently, then the remainder time to share. Facilitator: Be sure everyone has opportunity to share.