

RESOURCE 4.1

Directions for Four Corners

PART 1

When people work together in groups, each individual has a preference for how the common work is best undertaken.

The goals of Four Corners are:

- To acquaint people with four essential elements of group work;
- To explain how these elements interact and how people's preferences for particular elements affect group work;
- To provide an opportunity for groups to increase their awareness of which of the four elements they prefer, which their organizations prefer, and what the implications are of these preferences.

Process:

1. Notice the signs around the room:

North—action	South—community
East—vision-making	West—structure
2. **Community** folks often check to see if everyone is okay. They may speak up when a break is needed.
3. **Structure** folks often ask when, how, who says, how long, what time?
4. **Action** people are apt to say, "Enough talk, let's move on this!"
5. **Vision-making** people will often inquire about why something is being done, what the purpose is, or if an idea has implications that have not been considered.
6. Move to the corner that best represents the element that you feel is most essential to group work and/or most typical of what you contribute to a group. There is no "middle ground" as an alternative; you must choose a corner.
7. In your corners, discuss what your element brings to a group. Post your thoughts on these questions on a piece of chart paper in any way you'd like.
 - a. What are the positive attributes that you bring to a group?
 - b. What challenges might your group give to a group?
 - c. What is a motto that represents your group?
 - d. Who is a famous person that captures the essence of your group? This could be a nonfictional or fictional character.

8. After about 15 minutes of preparation, be ready explain your poster.
9. Listen as other groups explain their posters

PART 2

1. After you have gotten into your new groups, introduce yourselves, including your preferences. and discuss the following topics.
 - a. Look at the distribution in your group. If it is lopsided, ask what that might mean for the group. For example, a group with nearly everyone in **vision-making**, with a few people in **action** and **community**, and no one at all in **structure**, may have a tendency to talk far too much, frustrating the action people. Everyone will have to work conscientiously together to be sure the group develops some workable structures. It is important to acknowledge the strength of each preference as well as to own the potential downsides of each one when taken too far.
 - b. The need for balance between building a vision and taking action is often at the core of group dissatisfaction since **vision-making** people can be very powerful in their perspective, often being the point people in a change initiative. It helps to name the nature of a meeting. If **vision** has to be worked on, invite the **action** people to bring their knitting or some silly putty—seriously! If **structure** is conspicuously absent, focus a meeting on developing workable structures.
 - c. Notice the kinds of questions and language each preference uses: **caring** folks often check to see if everyone is okay. They may speak up when a break is needed. **Structure** folks often ask when, how, who says, how long, what time? **Action** people are apt to say, “Enough talk, let’s move on this!” **Vision-making** people will often inquire about why something is being done, what the purpose is, or if an idea has implications that have not been considered.
2. Be ready to share your ideas with the whole group.