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# The Johari Window

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## Objectives

At the end of this exercise, participants will have:

- 1) Discovered the concept of the Johari Window.
- 2) Identify attitudes, which foster or stem exchange of feedbacks
- 3) Foster an open behaviour within the group and better communication between participants

## Participants

- 8 to 12

## Time

- 90 minutes

## Resources

- Flip-charts and markers
- Diagrams of the Johari window
- Self-assessment handout
- Pens
- Model of Johari Window

## Flow

- 4) Introduction (10 min):
  - a) Distribute photocopied diagrams of the Johari Window or show them with a videoprojector;
  - b) Introduce the concept of Johari Window (see handout below)
  - c) Underline that when you reduce the "Blind Area", or the "Hidden Area", you enlarge the Open Area and individuals are encouraged to become more open.
  - d) Underline the role of the feedback in this process.
- 5) Self assessment (20 min)
  - a) Distribute Self-Assessment handouts (see below)
  - b) Asking for feedback
    - i) Explain participants that the only way to reduce their Blind Area and discover things about themselves that they ignore is to ask for feedback from others.
    - ii) Invite participants to look at the top horizontal scale (1 to 9) on the Self-Assessment handout and to place themselves on this scale according to the number of times they have asked for feedback from others.
  - c) Giving feedback

- i) Explain participants that the only way to reduce their Hidden Area is to disclose things about themselves by giving feedback to others.
  - ii) Invite participants to look at the left vertical scale (1 to 9) on the Self-Assessment handout and to place themselves on this scale according to the number of times they have given a feedback to others.
- 6) Group work (30 min)
- a) When participants have finish their self-assessment, invite them to form small groups of 3-4 members.
  - b) In each group, participants should share their self-assessment with others and check whether this corresponds with the way others perceive themselves. Then they try to identify what are, in their group, the strengths that facilitate exchange of feedback and what are the strengths, which make this exchange difficult.
- 7) Plenary discussion (30 min)
- a) Invite each group to share their conclusion in plenary
  - b) List all the positive and negative strengths identified by the groups
  - c) Invite participants to discuss what measures the group should take in order to increase strengths facilitating exchange of feedback (and communication) and how to reduce strengths inhibiting exchange of feedback (and communication).

## The Johari Window

### Creating better Understanding Between Individuals and Groups

The Johari Window is a communication model that can be used to improve understanding between individuals within a team or in a group setting. Based on disclosure, self-disclosure and feedback, the Johari Window can also be used to improve a group's relationship with other groups.

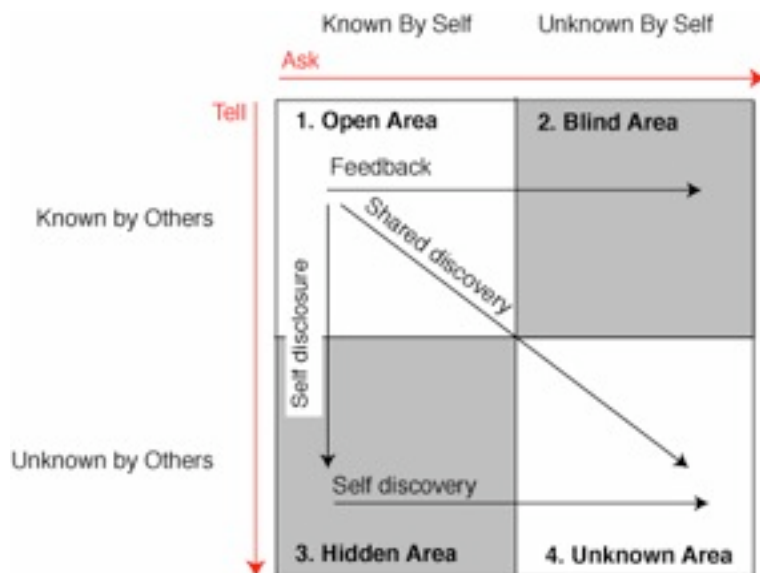
Developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham (the word "Johari" comes from "Joseph" and "Harry") the Johari Window is based on two key ideas:

- That individuals can build trust between themselves by disclosing information about themselves, and
- That they can learn about themselves and come to terms with personal issues with the help of feedback from others.

By explaining the idea of Johari Window to your team, you can help team members understand the value of self-disclosure, and gently encourage people to give and accept feedback. Done sensitively, this can help people build more-trusting relationships with one another, solve issues and work more effectively as a team.

### Explaining the Johari Window

The Johari Window model consists of a four-square grid (think of taking a piece of paper and dividing it into four parts by drawing one line down the middle of the paper from top to bottom, and another line through the middle of the paper from side-to-side). This is shown in the diagram below.



Using the Johari model, each person is represented by their four-quadrant, or four-pane window. Each of these contains and represents personal information – feelings, motivation – about the person, and shows whether the information is known or not known by themselves or other people.

The four-quadrant are:

- Quadrant 1: Open Area

What is known by the person about him/herself and is also known by others.

- Quadrant 2: Blind Area or "Blind Spot"

What is unknown by the person about him/herself but which others know. This can be simple information, or can involve deep issues (for example feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, unworthiness, rejection) which are difficult for individuals to face directly, and yet can be seen by others.

- Quadrant 3: Hidden or Avoided Area

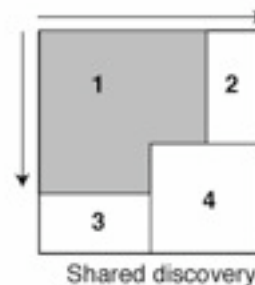
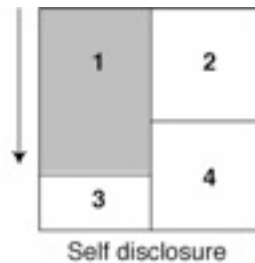
What the person knows about him/herself that others do not.

- Quadrant 4: Unknown Area

What is unknown by the person about him/herself and is also unknown by others.

The process of enlarging the open quadrant vertically is called self-disclosure<sup>1</sup>, a give and take process between the person and the people he/she interacts with.

As information is shared, the boundary with the hidden quadrant moves downwards. And as other people reciprocate, trust tends to build between them.



## How to use the tool

The process of enlarging the open quadrant horizontally is one of feedback. Here the individual learns things about him/herself that others can see, but he or she can't.<sup>2</sup>

If anyone is interested in learning more about this individual, they reciprocate by disclosing information in their hidden quadrant.

For example, the first participant may disclose that he/she is a runner. The other participant may respond by adding that he/she works out regularly at the local gym, and may then disclose that the gym has recently added an indoor track for winter runners.

As your levels of confidence and self-esteem rises, it is easier to invite others to comment on your blind spots. Obviously, active listening skills are useful in this exercise.

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<sup>1</sup> Don't be rash in your self disclosure. Disclosing armless items builds trust. However, disclosing information which could damage people's respect for you can put you in a position of weakness.

<sup>2</sup> Be careful in the way you give feedback. Some cultures have a very open and accepting approach of feedback. Others don't. You can cause incredible offence if you offer personal feedback to someone who's not used to it. Be sensitive and start gradually.

## **The Johari Window in a Team Context**

Keep in mind that established team members will have larger open areas than new team members. New team members start with smaller Open Areas because little knowledge about the new team members has yet been shared. The size of the Open Area can be expanded horizontally into the hidden or avoided space by the sender's disclosure of information, feelings, etc about himself/herself to the group and group members.

Also, group members can help a person expand their Open Areas into the hidden area by asking the sender about him or herself. Managers and team leaders play a key role here, facilitating feedback and disclosure among group members, and by providing constructive feedback to individuals about their own blind areas.

### **Key Points**

In most cases, the aim in groups should be to develop the Open Area of every person.

Working in this area with others usually allows for enhanced individual and team effectiveness and productivity. The Open Area is the 'space' where good communications and cooperation occur, free from confusion, conflict and misunderstanding.

Self-disclosure is the process by which people expand the open Area vertically. Feedback is the process by which people expand this area horizontally.

By encouraging healthy self-disclosure and sensitive feedback, you can build a stronger and more effective team.

# Self-Assessment Handout

