

# "Could it be that . . . ?"

## A Peer-to-Peer Consultation Exercise

### **Leadership Challenge Instructions**

In preparation for your Peer-to-Peer Consultation Session, you will write about an important leadership challenge you are currently facing in your work. Choose a challenge that is pressing and one you are willing to describe and discuss openly with colleagues who will receive your leadership challenge in advance. Confidentiality is the norm, and Chatham House rules apply.

During the session, you will discuss your challenge in small peer-to-peer consultation groups and receive feedback from colleagues. In turn, you will provide feedback on your colleagues' challenges.

#### Purpose

- to pause, reflect, and apply new strategies to something concrete in your own work context
- to learn from your peers and receive specific feedback based on their experiences and insights
- to strengthen your diagnostic and coaching skills by helping your peers probe their problem, challenge assumptions, and identify action alternatives by asking constructive questions; this will not only benefit the presenter, it will help you apply concepts and sharpen your analytic skills

#### **Directions**

Your written description should be brief—about half a page. The challenge should involve:

- <u>you as a leader</u>. It must be a situation where you can directly or indirectly make a difference. Be clear what your role is or could be in this particular situation.
- <u>a goal</u> or aspiration to improve your organization itself and/or improve the quality of life for the community your organization serves. This could be anything from a mayoral priority you are working on, to an organizational change effort, to a hope for better team performance.
- <u>a problem</u>, obstacle, or dilemma. What makes it a challenge? What puzzles you? What is the
  most important question you have been asking yourself concerning your role in addressing the
  problem?

Without revealing the identities of the participants or agencies involved in your challenge, provide enough detail that others can meaningfully discuss the challenge with you.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Chatham House Rules permit participants to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the participant that provided that information may be revealed.

This exercise was compiled and edited by Jorrit de Jong, Lisa Cox, and Sanderijn Cels for the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, a collaboration between Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Business School, and Bloomberg Philanthropies. It is not intended to serve as an endorsement, source of primary data, or illustration of effective or ineffective management. The practices in the exercise were inspired by the writing and teaching of many colleagues at Harvard and around the world, and we are particularly indebted to Ronnie Heifetz, Marty Linsky, Bob Kegan, and Lisa Lahey. HKS Case No. 2211.41. Copyright © 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023 President and Fellows of Harvard College. (Revised 3/2023.)

Please submit your leadership challenge by the provided deadline so that peers have time to read and reflect on it before the session. Don't overthink or spend too time writing up your challenge. It doesn't have to be perfect, and your perspective on it will likely change. Enjoy the opportunity to reflect on something you care about and to benefit from the wisdom of your peers!