



70th Annual Local Government Conference
November 9-20, 2020

Leading Through Change ... *In times of uncertainty* *Gwen Kennedy, Ph.D. and Wendy Fraser, Ph.D.*

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ Share our stories that lead to insights into leading in times of uncertainty
- ✓ Share how to develop simple rules to help you and/or your organization navigate during times of uncertainty
- ✓ Provide you a mental framework – the CDE Model - for leading change, especially in times of uncertainty
- ✓ Identify strategies to lead you and your organization into self-organizing successes





Simple Rules

Chaos theory and Complexity Sciences are resources for leaders navigating times that are uncertain, unpredictable, and uncontrollable.

Simple rules guide complex systems. In human systems, simple rules are your core values in action or guiding principles. These rules help guide individual and groups.

Glenda Eoyang, Ph.D. and Ed Olson (2001): Facilitating organization change: Lessons from complexity science.

Discovering Your Simple Rules

Option A: Reflect on critical decisions – the cross-roads in your life

Option B: Notice the patterns in your life





Discovering your Simple Rules – Option A

Reflect on critical decisions – the cross-roads - in your life

- What was the situation? What made it difficult?
- What did you consider? What did you decide?
- How has it made a difference?

Ideally, share your story with one other.

- What core values were underlying your decision?
- Put your core values in action form

Discovering your Simple Rules - Example

| Core Values | Simple Rules |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Learning | Always go for the learning experience |
| Resourceful | There will always be enough money |
| Respect | Respect and value others |
| Flow | Seek serendipity and synchronicity |



Discovering your Simple Rules – Option B

Notice the patterns in your life

- Describe how you make decisions.
- What influences your thinking?
- Identify the underlying simple rules.

Discovering your Simple Rules - Example

| Simple Rules | Insights/Notes/Patterns |
|--|---|
| Will this drain my energy or build it? | Is this going to help me learn something, even if it's hard to watch/read? Or is it merely gossip or will drain my energy (make me frustrated, sad, angry, bewildered, numb, cynical?) |
| Am I being generative? | Am I giving back to the next generation? Are my actions building others up? Am I allowing others to build on my work/ideas? Am I building on others' ideas/work without regard to my ego? |
| What are my choices? | Can I think of other choices? Can I help others think about their choices? Expand possibilities – stay away from either-or thinking. |
| Am I contributing or learning? | Examine my choices around whether to continue employment, volunteerism, etc. if I feel I am contributing to something meaningful and/or if I am learning and growing. |
| Am I open and curious? | Withholding judgment; willing to learn something new; am I learning from differences? Do I seek out different opinions? |

Individual Exercise



Think of the simple
rule(s) that guides

YOU

(~3 minutes)

— Simple Rules at the Group Level

Flocking BOIDS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbUPfMXXQIY>

- Cohesion
- Alignment
- Crowding avoidance



Examples

US Marines – “When command lines are down”

- Keep moving
- Use surprise
- Take to high ground whenever possible

When you are lost

- Stay put
- Make as much noise as possible
- Move to an open space where you can be seen



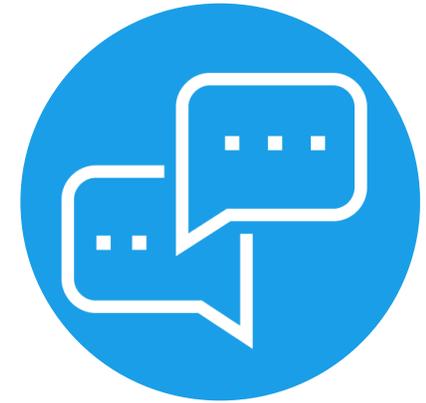
Simple Rules at the Organization-Level

Simple Rules can be applied at the organization level and can guide:

- ✓ When you are in crisis
- ✓ When you need alignment – what should be your focus?
- ✓ When you need to focus resources and prioritize
- ✓ When you want to reinforce key cultural attributes

Simple Rules for Your Organization

1. Think about a simple rule that would support and strengthen your organization in these times of uncertainty.
2. Type your idea into chat.

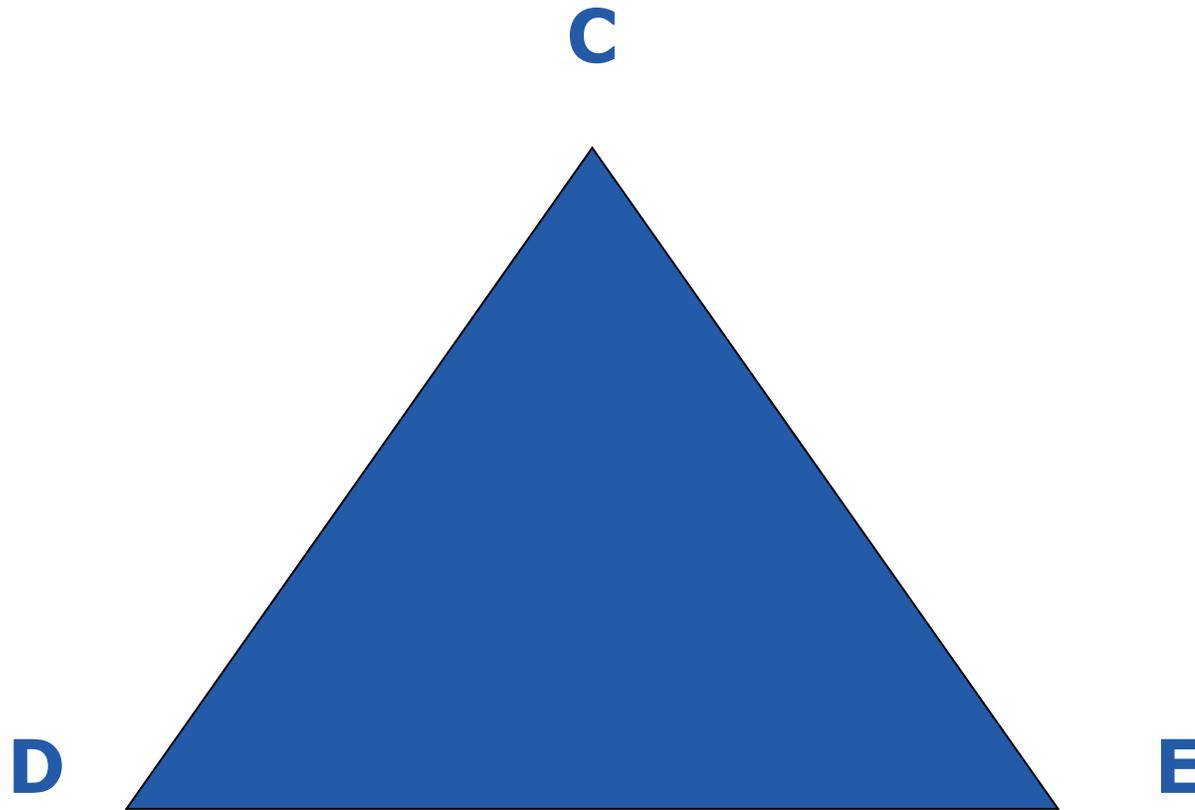


Simple Rules for AML

1. Think about a simple rule that would help AML lead in these times of uncertainty.
2. Type your idea into chat.



Use the CDE Model to Evaluate and Guide Change



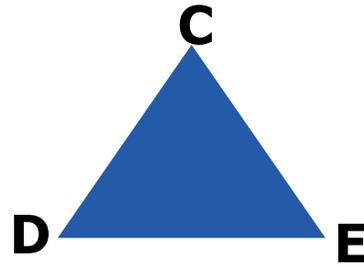
C = Container

D = Differences

E = Exchanges

The CDE model comes from Glenda Eoyang's dissertation (Nov. 2001). The CDE model is a tool for observing human systems dynamics and choosing the action to take to move the change process forward. The goal of the change agent is to facilitate the direction of change, recognizing that all members of the group can and do impact the direction of change.

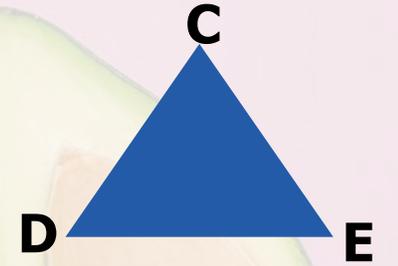
Container



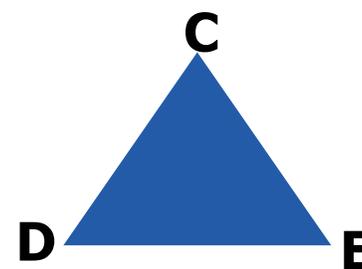
- The container is the boundary that define what is “in” and what is “out”.
- Containers may emerge from:
 - Physical boundaries – such as a room or building
 - Psychological or emotional connections that give rise to patterns – such as a charismatic leader, organizational silos, fears, etc.
 - Simple containers: meeting agendas, team membership
 - Complex containers: organizational history, culture



Differences



- Differences determine the primary patterns of behavior that emerge within the system.
- Differences you pay attention to are generally differences in degree or differences in kind:
 - Quantitatively or qualitatively better or worse, more or less, bigger or smaller, faster or slower.
 - Differences in people such as the degree of skill, amount of understanding, influence of roles, will establish patterns of interaction that can dominate discussions and decision-making.
 - Differences can also represent the kind of diversity present.
- *Increasing, decreasing, or introducing new differences will shift the conditions and change the patterns in the system.*



Exchanges

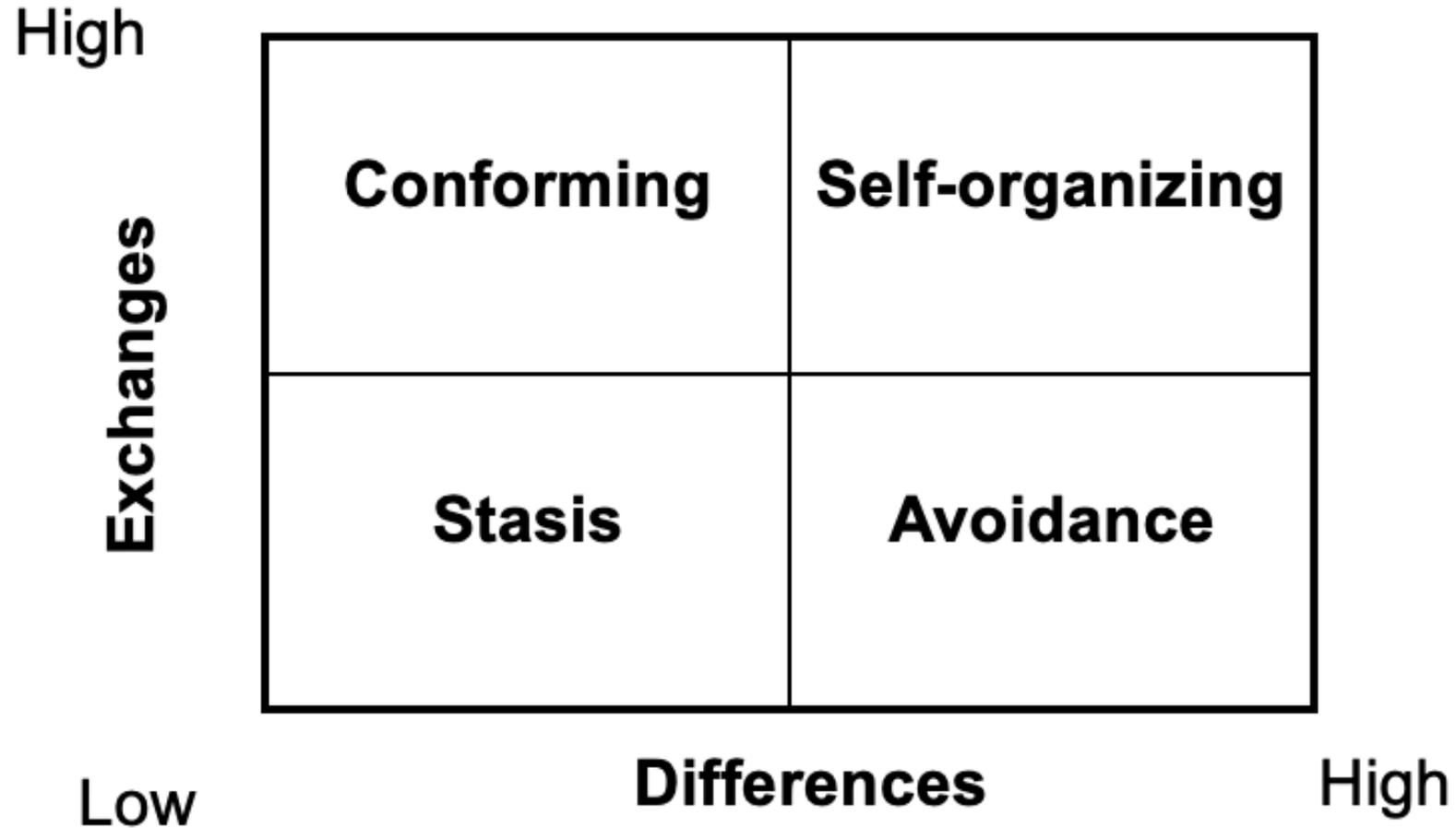
- Exchanges are the connections in the system that ensure the movement of information, energy, and other resources.



- Exchanges can inform the system about rules of what is acceptable or allowed.
- Games and sports, competition and collaboration, giving and receiving are all ways the system engages in exchanges that shape patterns.
- Measurement and regular reporting, planning and budgeting are all exchanges that influence decision-making.
- Exchanges can be in the form of feedback, humor, pulse checks, reflective discussion of issues.

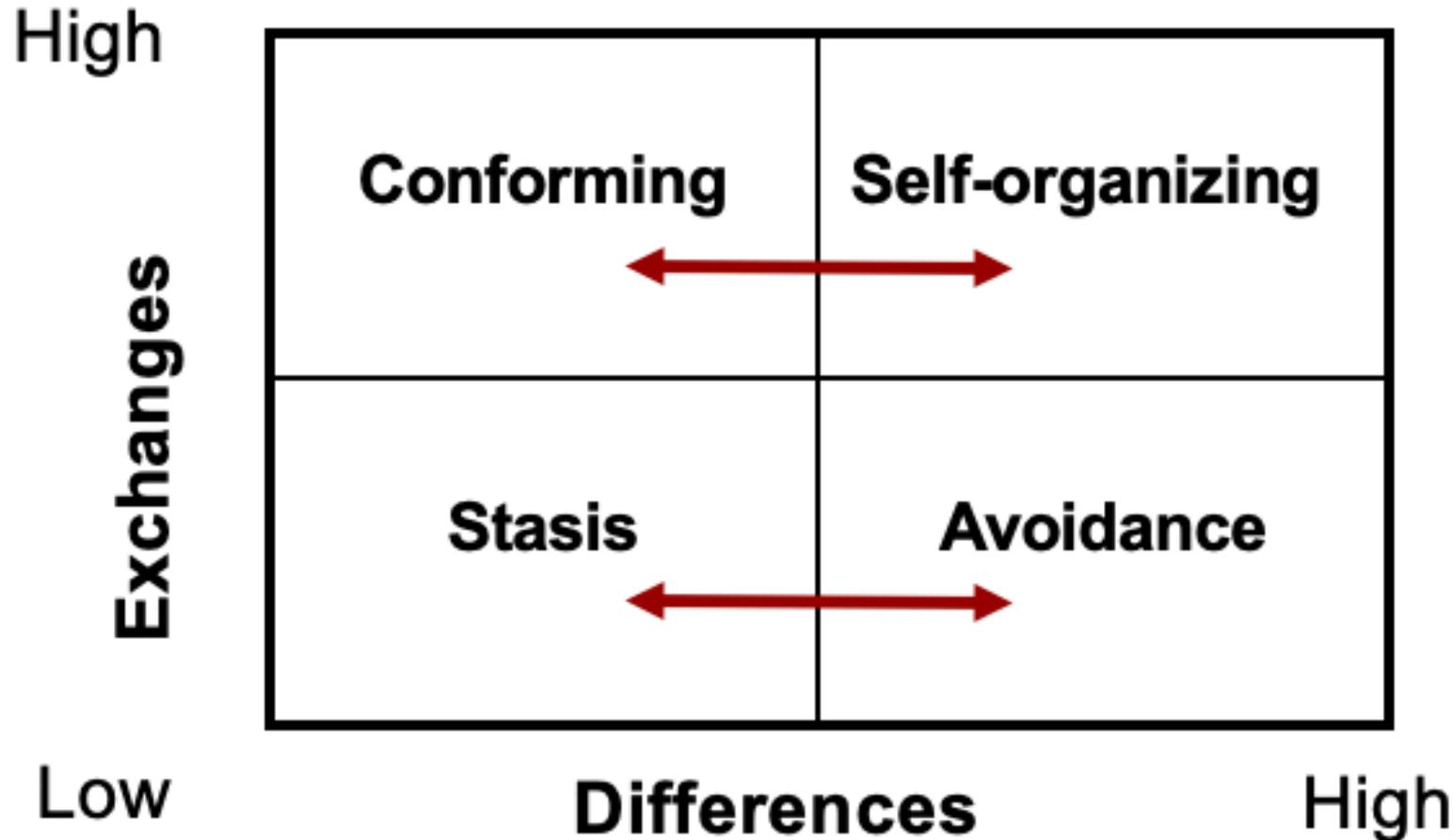
- *Focus on what exchanges transform the system – quality of exchanges, strength of connections, choices of how and when exchanges happen, and with whom.*

Difference Matrix



Adapted from: Olson, Ed & Eoyang, Glenda (2001). Facilitating organization change: Lessons from complexity science. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Difference Matrix



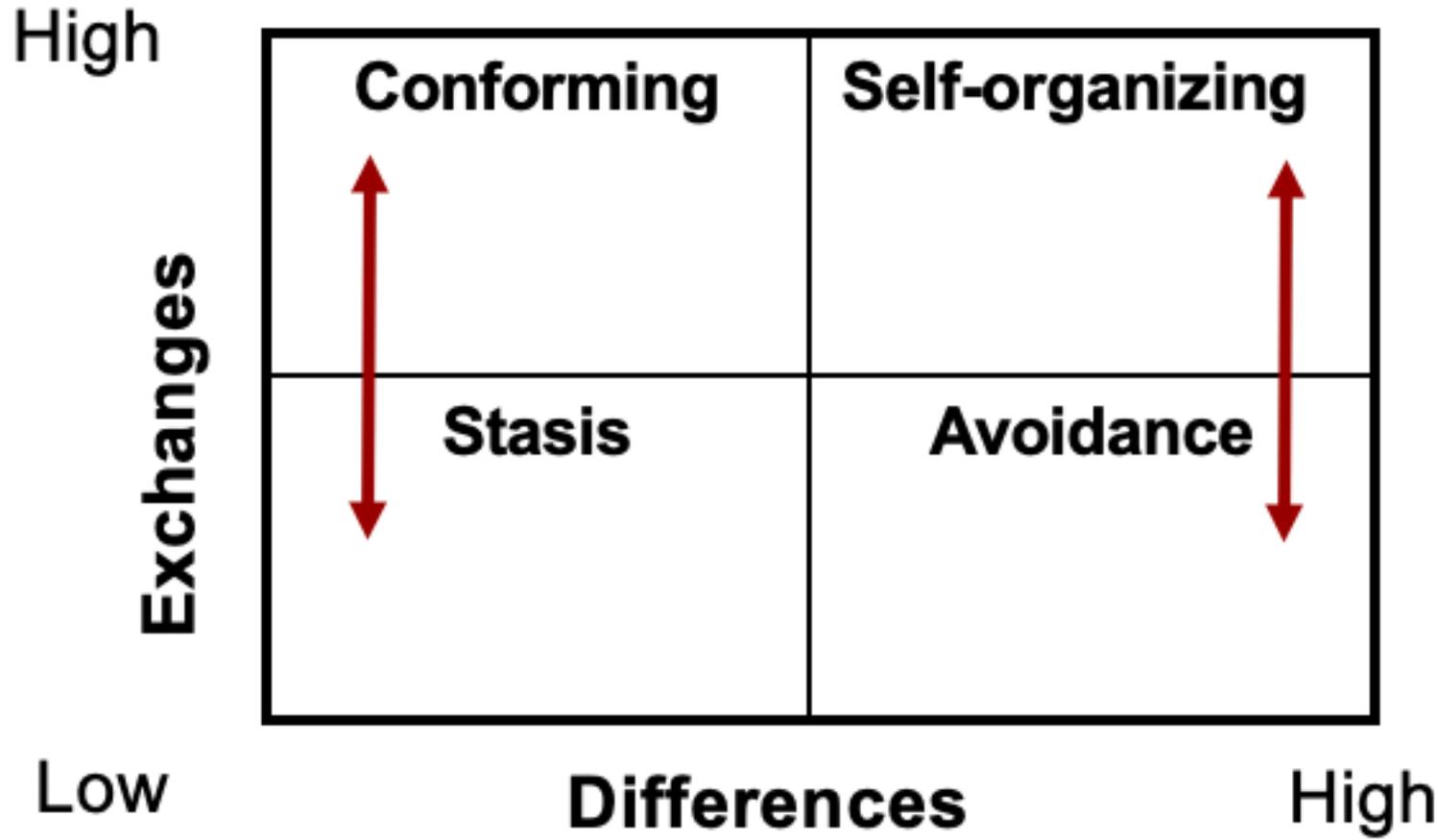
To decrease differences:

Seek common ground. Find areas where you agree, share values or share a perspective, a common enemy or a common goal.

To increase differences:

Ask questions. Increase awareness of differences. Challenge perspectives and methods. Ask for a definition of terms. Ask what it means to the other person. Acknowledge the other's passion for their position and then state your own view. Re-think your own view- out loud.

Difference Matrix



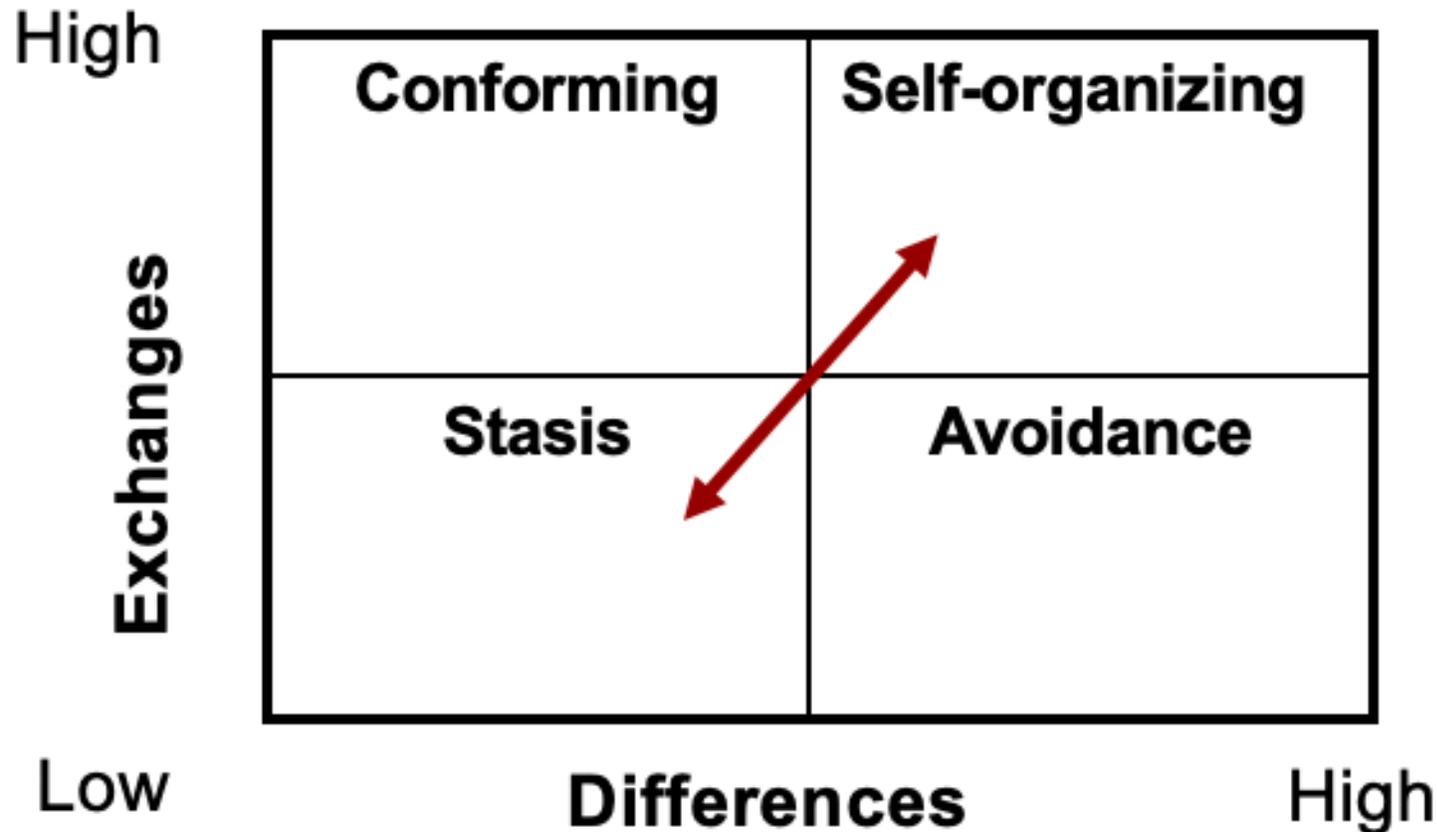
To decrease exchanges:

Limit exchange of information, resources or energy. Spend your time doing something else.

To increase exchanges:

Ask questions. Share stories. If not getting the desired results, do something different, wait, assess results, and then try something different again. Tell a joke. Share a meal. Work on a task together. Talk about your values.

Difference Matrix



To decrease exchanges and decrease differences:

Structure conversations.
Focus efforts. Subdivide group into areas of agreement or common interests.

To increase exchanges and increase differences:

Expand topic of conversation.
Add membership to the group.

Applications: *Using Covid and the economy as the container, how do we move to a self-organizing space?*

To increase differences:

- Add membership to the group. Broaden the area of focus.

To decrease differences:

- Seek common ground. Find areas where you agree, share values or share a perspective, a common enemy or a common goal.

To increase exchanges:

- Ask questions. Share stories. Tell a joke. Work on a task together. Talk about your values. Share data. Share resources.

To decrease exchanges:

- Structure conversations. Focus efforts. Subdivide group into areas of agreement or common interests.
 1. Type your idea into chat.



Closing

- What did you find meaningful or useful?
 - Type in Chat
- Facilitators' Closing Comments:
 - J. Gwen Kennedy, Ph.D., [Kennedy & Associates](#)
 - Wendy Fraser, Ph.D., [Fraser Consulting](#)

