

Using Consensus Cards

Consensus cards provide a quick method of determining the degree of agreement among a group of participants. It allows for those who have not fully reached a decision to express what is keeping them from full agreement. Rarely does everyone completely agree – and if this isn't resolved or discussed before people leave the meeting, then the “after meeting” can sidetrack what may have seemed like a clear decision.

Materials needed are 3 x 5 Line Ruled Assorted Color Index Cards 100/Pack. Here is how it works:

1. Each person is given a stack of color index cards – they can be labeled as below, or a “key” can be written somewhere in the room



Fully
Disagree



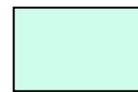
Can't Agree



Don't Care



Have Concerns



Fully Agree

2. The “question” is phrased so that the action step is clear – so usually in statement form. Be sure it is phrased in a manner that any of the choices are legitimate responses.

*Example, “The team will meet weekly from now on.”
Or “We will implement this new process on Med-Surg first”*

3. Participants are asked to hold up the card that best reflects their feeling. The facilitator should have enough time to record the responses (or at least make note of them).
4. The facilitator looks for the **Blue** or **Purple** card holders – don't worry about the Yellows -- and asks them to express what they would need to get to full agreement: “What would it take to get your full agreement?” We don't start with the **Red** card folks because we want them to have the time to hear others rationale, and see that others concerns are responded to. The others are more likely to change their mind.
5. After the responses are considered and any changes are made to the topic in question, then the statement is posed again, and another show of cards is requested. You are looking for a room with **Greens** and **Yellows**.
6. If you can't get full agreement the first time, repeat the process. Remember, it is much better to know where the participants stand than to mistakenly believe there is 100% support – even if it takes some time to get there.

Source: [Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making](#) by [Sam Kaner](#) (Author)