

Facilitation Difficulty:  45 min.

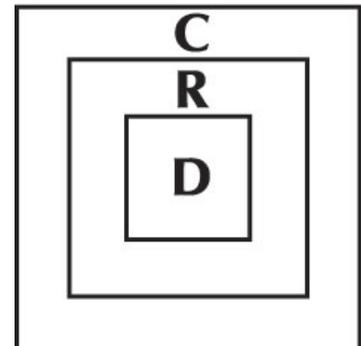
 Up to 16; can adapt for larger groups

 No preconference

Purpose – To recognize and share the responses and feelings that arise with a variety of requests, and to recognize different people’s responses to the same request. This activity creates a common vocabulary among participants, especially around requests or directions that distress or challenge us. It can also have the effect of encouraging a group to bond, thereby creating trust. The activity is especially helpful to do before participants are asked to take actions that may cause them stress.

Group size – Up to 16. For larger groups, subdivide and tape multiple diagrams.

Preparation – Consult the Example Zones Situations for reference, and prepare your list of “situations” appropriate to the needs of your group. On the day of the meeting, use painter’s tape to construct a series of concentric squares or rectangles large enough for all the participants to stand around the entire diagram and for several of them to be able stand close together in the smallest zone. Label the inner zone “D” for the Danger Zone, the middle zone “R” for the Risk Zone, and the outer zone “C” for the Comfort Zone.



Steps:

1. **Setup** – Invite the participants to arrange themselves around the taped zones diagram. Point out that individuals have different reactions when asked to take particular actions. What may seem entirely safe and delightful to one person may strike terror in another. Review our working definition of each zone as follows. Step into each rectangle as you explain the defining characteristics of each zone. (5-10 min.)
 - *In the Comfort Zone, we feel at ease. If someone asks us to do an activity in our Comfort Zone, we experience no tension around the request. We believe we have a good understanding of what needs to be done, feel comfortable doing it, and know how to navigate occasional rough spots with ease. Activities in our Comfort Zone can offer solace when other demands or requests put us in our Danger Zone, or when we find ourselves spending too much time in the Risk Zone.*
 - *In the Risk Zone, we feel a certain amount of nervous energy. Requests that put us into our Risk Zone trigger feelings of slight to moderate stress, but we are still willing to “take the risk.” We will probably spend more time on preparation, and before we complete these activities, we might find ourselves thinking about these requests while we’re doing unrelated tasks like driving or showering. Although there is anxious energy or nervous excitement associated with the Risk Zone, the overall feeling is one of “I can do this.” Once a Risk Zone task has been successfully completed, many people feel a real sense of accomplishment. Learning and growth are associated with the Risk Zone.*
 - *Requests that put us into our Danger Zone trigger powerful defensiveness, fears, alarm, and a strong desire to avoid or escape. Even thinking about those requests demands so much mental and emotional energy, that it’s impossible to accomplish anything within that Zone. Picture someone alone in the middle of the ocean. All their energy is spent just keeping their head above the water and they can’t think of anything but how to survive. When we are in our Danger Zone, all we can think about is escape. No real learning can happen when someone is in the Danger Zone. (That said, once the person has been able to shift to activities or experiences in their comfort or risk*

zone, they may be then able to process what happened and learn from the experience.)

2. **Activity** – Explain that you will now read a series of situations (see examples below). As each participant thinks about how they would feel experiencing such a situation, they should step into the zone that matches the feelings that arise. The example situations are intended to move people from zone to zone, and point out differences in participants' perceptions of the risk level. (10 min.)
3. **Debrief and reflect** – (15 min.)
 - *Why do this activity?*
 - *What does this tell us about learning?*
 - *Did anyone never step into the danger zone during this activity? If not, what situation would have put you in it?*
 - *Why is this an important scaffolding activity before doing protocols where you give and receive feedback?*
 - *When might you use this?*
 - *How does increased change and stress relate to the Zones?*
4. **Written Silent Reflection** – (2-5 min.)
 - *What do you want to remember about this activity?*
 - *How might you use it with your students and/or colleagues?*

Option – [Zones Pie Chart Activity](#)

You may use this list as it is written or amend it for your group. There is nothing sacred about these examples. Feel free to make up your own, keeping in mind the group of people who will be experiencing this activity. A mix of personal and professional questions seem to work best. If you are using this activity as a prelude to doing CFG® work, be sure to include items very similar to #5 and #9 as understanding how different people in the group instinctually respond to those requests will help you guide them in their CFG work.

If you were asked to do these things, step into the zone that matches the feelings that arise?

1. Sing in front of your students
2. Sing in front of your peers
3. Speak in front of a group of principals, heads of school, or political officials
4. Take a trip out of the country, to a place where you don't speak the language fluently
5. Confront a colleague about something they did that disturbs you
6. Dance at a wedding
7. Try a new recipe for guests
8. Share your feelings with someone you don't know well
9. Have your work publicly reviewed by a group
10. Have a conversation about
 - a. Race – with someone who is not your race
 - b. Religion – with someone who does not share your religious beliefs
 - c. Politics – with someone who doesn't share your political beliefs
11. Go scuba diving
12. Try food you have never eaten before and you aren't really sure what it is