



Personal Dissent Self-Assessment

Score yourself from 1 to 4 on the following statements

1= Not at all 2=Sort of 3=Mostly 4=Definitely!	Score
I am willing to be patient so that more voices can contribute to the discussion, even if I think the best way forward is clear.	
I consider the potential value of my dissent <i>before</i> I weigh the risks to my career.	
When I disagree with others at work or in a professional arena, it's because I truly care about the work I do and want to do it as well as possible.	
When I have a different opinion from everyone else, I tend to share it even if I don't think it will make a huge difference on the outcome.	
I say things that feel important to me, even if it causes group discomfort.	
If a team I'm on makes a group decision that I have spoken out against, I feel satisfied that I have been heard and continue to contribute to the team.	
If I over hear a comment I find racist, I'll say something, even if the person who said it is someone I'll probably never see again for the rest of my life.	
When I disagree with the majority opinion, I try to add perspective in a way that seeks to reconcile their position with mine.	
When my colleagues and I can't seem to come to an understanding on the best path forward, I focus on finding the core purpose that we have in common so that we have a foundation to build our dialogue on.	
When a colleague of color is not being given credit for an original idea, I make sure to reiterate to the group who the idea came from.	
Total	

Over 35 Points: Dissent is a strength for you. You do not shy away from it, and you do it in a way that improves your work while maintaining partnerships and peer relationships.

30-35 Points: You dissent, for sure. To be a more productive dissenter, you may need to be more comfortable with discomfort and maintain a focus on the purpose of your work. Or you may need to be more willing to relinquish some of the power you hold to others, for the greater good.

Under 30 Points: Uhoh, you may be a conflict avoider, even when what you have to say would be super valuable. Please, I'm begging you, find ways to share your opinions, we need them!



Organization Dissent-Tolerance Self-Assessment

Score your organization from 1 to 4 on the following statements

1= Not at all 2=Sort of 3=Mostly 4=Definitely!	Score
Group discussions have the power to influence final decisions.	
Staff can disagree with their supervisor without fearing repercussions.	
When people disagree with each other, it's because they really believe in the work we do and they want us to do it as well as we possibly can.	
When someone disagrees with everyone else, they still share it even if it clearly won't change the outcome of the decision	
In meetings, everyone at the table is encouraged to provide their perspective.	
If a team makes a group decision that someone has spoken out against, that person continues to fully contribute to the team's work.	
This organization structures discussion in a way that maximizes the diversity of voices in the conversation.	
Staff members are encouraged to take part in professional debate on issues they care about in the library field.	
My colleagues and I have a strong, clear, and shared purpose, and that purpose drives our decision-making process.	
As an organization we take positions against public policy and/or professional issues that affect our ability to best serve our patrons.	
Total	

Over 35 Points: Your organization likes dissent and is better for it! Dissent is considered an important and powerful part of the decision-making process. You and your colleagues feel heard when you voice opinions that oppose the majority.

30-35 Points: Dissent is a regular part of your organization's decision-making process, but things can definitely be improved. A culture of dissent, grounded in shared purpose, will ensure disagreements are a productive way to add valuable information, and not just frustrating noise!

Under 30 Points: Your organization does not particularly encourage or value dissent. Perhaps it over-values efficiency. Perhaps management is unwilling to relinquish any power. Perhaps the culture values personal goals over shared purpose. Start building a dissent-encouraging workplace!

Building a Pro-Dissent Organization
For Managers

Aim	Action
Be aware that power structures mean dissent is more risky for some staff	Structure Meetings to maximize the number of voices heard. Eg. hold smaller group break-out meetings
	Provide a variety of outlets/mediums for people to be heard
Value diversity and act like it	Give credit for good ideas
	Seek out diverse opinions and diverse perspectives
	Hire for diverse backgrounds
Maintain focus on shared purpose	In all communication, reinforce the purpose of the work
	Make the connection between the employee and the user real and deep through community engagement
	Make purpose-driven decisions and be transparent about them
Relinquish some of your power	Only ask for input if it will actually influence decision-making
	Let yourself be outvoted
Create a culture that values multiple perspectives even if it means more conflict and less efficient decision-making	Be aware of and don't stand for group-think
	Let those who voice a minority opinion know that their input is valuable even if it doesn't change the majority decision
	Set a confident, calming tone when it comes to conflict: disagreement does not mean the sky is falling!

Building a Pro-Dissent Organization

All Staff

Awareness/Action	Example
If a decision is being made too quickly, slow it down	<i>"I'm not sure if this is the right direction or not, but I'd really like to have a chance to speak with our users about how it would affect them. Can we revisit this next meeting when we know more?"</i>
If the majority are headed away from purpose, ask reframing questions	<i>"This policy change is great for funding, but we have a goal this year to remove barriers for immigrant community members. Will this actually create a new hurdle for them?"</i>
Notice which colleagues have not yet been heard and bring them in	<i>"James, you know our teen patrons really well, how do you think this will impact them?"</i>
If a colleague has an idea or raise a question that was never answered, return to it	<i>"Janet, you were the one who initially raised this question, do you feel like we've adequately addressed it?"</i>
If decisions being made without reference to impacts on related systems, raise questions	<i>"I know this would be good for our balance sheet, but will this put a strain on the homeless shelter?"</i>



Dissent with Intention Self-Check

1. **Authenticity and Motivation:** Who is helped by my dissent? Who is harmed? Am I speaking for others when I should speak for myself? Is this my authentic belief? Do I want someone to feel or look bad?
2. **Level of understanding:** Do I understand the systems that will be affected by my action or inaction? What information do I need to seek or intelligence do I need to build to better understand the impact of my action or inaction?
3. **Power and privilege:** What power structures, privilege, and/or oppression am I not considering. What is the injustice that will occur if I do not dissent? Am I okay with that?
4. **Alternatives:** Is this the best time, place, and manner? Are there other frameworks or modes of thought that might be more useful?
5. **Risk:** Lastly, what are the risks if I voice dissent? Is the value gained worth the risk? What is the worst case scenario?