

# Generative Discussion Recipe

Struggling to facilitate a productive and generative board meeting? You're not alone! Maria Huntley, Executive Director of [Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians](#), recommends following this "recipe" for a better board discussion (originally adapted from [Mary Byers](#)). This recipe structures the conversation to make sure all voices are heard.

## Introduction

Start with a staff member or subject matter expert giving an introduction to the topic or issue. Or replace this phase with some pre-reading or prework to get everyone on the board on the same page.

## Discussion Round One

During this round, the goal is NOT to jump into immediate problem-solving. To help with that, each person should start their statements with one of the following:

- It occurs to me...
- I wonder...
- I'm curious about...

## Discussion Round Two

For round two, we'll answer a set of specific questions to make sure we're considering all the facets of the issue at hand.

- Are we realistically able to influence this issue? (Yes or No)
- What issues need to be considered when discussing this topic?
- What implications does the changing landscape have on this topic for the organization?
- How does this issue impact our constituents / members?
- What don't we know that we need to know?

## Next Steps

After the full discussions in rounds 1 & 2, it's time to talk about what happens *after* the meeting.

- Now that we know what we know, what are proposed next steps?
- How can staff best respond to this issue?
- What, if any, additional information do we need?
- How do we want to proceed?



**Hi, I'm Jess Birken.**

I'm the owner of Birken Law Office & host of the podcast Charity Therapy. I help nonprofits solve problems so they can quit worrying and get back to what matters most - The Mission. I'm not like most attorneys, I actually have an outgoing personality, and - like you - I like to think outside the box. Most of my clients are passionate and have an entrepreneurial spirit. I'm like that too. My goal is to help you crush it. Getting bogged down in the minutia sucks the joy out of the important stuff. My clients want to do the work - not the paperwork.

**Let's connect!**

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