

Quality Standards for Consultancy

Rick James

In every consultancy I do, I commit myself to:

Ensure the client takes responsibility for change. I will investigate and discern their motivation for change at the outset, particularly amongst the leadership (refusing work if the client does not appear ready); use data gathering and facilitation methods that promote ownership and trust (adapted to culture and context); and turn down requests that would remove clients' responsibility for their own change. I will try and push people to take individual responsibility for how they have contributed to the situation and how they will behave differently in the future.

Understand the situation from the client's perspective and how this is affected by their changing context. This involves active listening and develops trust. I will look at the client within its wider network of relationships, such as the church, donors, and peer agencies. I will ensure that recommendations for change are prioritised and pragmatic and do not push the client too far too fast.

Take a people-centred approach that consciously works with emotions, wills and human spirits. I need the courage to surface and manage people's fears of change in an appropriate way. I will engage with people's values and faith.

Address relationships (including leadership) within the organisation. I will analyse how power dynamics within the organisation (including gender and diversity issues) affect performance. I will consciously try to help leaders see how they need to change in order to assist the organisation to change. I encourage reconciliations in relationships.

Create safe, 'sacred' spaces to allow clients to stop, reflect, listen to others and God, hear feedback about past behaviour and future plans.

Integrate a spiritual dimension by:

- Praying for every client – listening to God about the situation and interceding on their behalf
- Encouraging clients to establish their own intercessory processes
- Creating space within any process to listen to God where appropriate
- Ensuring opportunities for God's Holy Spirit to bring transformation. Letting go of control and getting out of the way when necessary.
- Following a Biblical process of change, including repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation
- Using the Bible with discernment, not as a tool for manipulation
- Focusing on life-giving spiritual elements such as vision, values, hope

Focus on the implementation of change, not simply the planning of it. I will build in follow-through wherever possible, to walk alongside, monitor and support the management of change and to systematically reflect and learn from every consultancy exercise.

Live out spiritual virtues as much as possible:

- *Humility* to look to God's power, to value others' contributions, to genuinely listen, own my weaknesses and to continuously learn
- *Compassion* for the client, earnestly desiring the very best for them and injecting hope
- *Patience* to put up with a different pace and standards of a client
- *Determination* to produce work of the highest standards and to follow-through rigorously
- *Generosity* in setting fee rates and time commitments within family boundaries
- *Self-control* to be a careful steward of my time and client resources
- *Honesty* to make sure feedback, reports and writings are full of grace and truth.