johari
window

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What is it about:

- interpersonal awareness
- reflection and development of personal behaviours
- understanding differences between how people see themselves and how others see them

source: The Johari Window theory created by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham.

domains: self awareness, personal reflection, interpersonal communication and group feedback

approach description:

One day, Charles Horton Cooley, an American sociologist, stated:

"I am not who you think I am; I am not who I think I am; I am who I think you think I am"

This quote helps us understand the difficulty of individuals to understand who they are, and to challenge the idea about what we know about ourselves. People build their perception of the world based on how they see themselves, and how they think people see them.

The Johari Window Theory aims to improve self awareness and our abilities to work well with others. It supports finding the differences between how we see ourselves and how others see us.
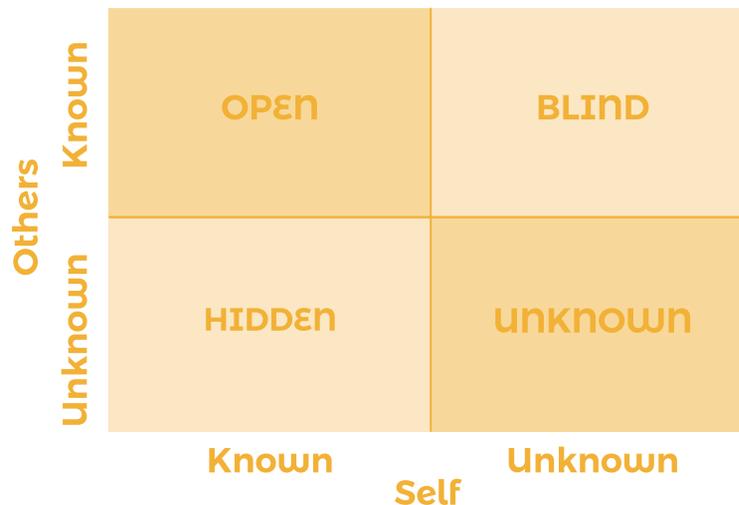
The final idea is that, by knowing these differences, interactions with people will become more effective, engaging and productive - thus, building on the communication.

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The tool is a 4-square window divided into 2 matrix (Others and Self). It also links to what people know and unknown. The result is this window:

The Johari Window

	Known (Self)	Unknown (Self)
Known (Others)	OPEN	BLIND
Unknown (Others)	HIDDEN	UNKNOWN

Self: Known — Unknown
Others: Known — Unknown

The four squares of the window are:
- **Open.** Things known by self and others;
- **Blind.** Thing known by others but unknown by self;
- **Hidden.** Things known by self but unknown by others;
- **Unknown.** Things not known by either self or others.

These squares are not fixed. They can grow or become smaller, depending on your level of awareness and the feedback you get from Others. Johari understands that to know your window there must be a process of self-understanding (questioning) and feedback from a group of people. Feedback then becomes a core tool to understand your window size and differences.

aim of use:

The Johari Window canva serves us as a tool for self-discovery and to build better relationships, based on more authentic interactions and feedback. It can be both a reflective and communication tool for individuals and groups that helps in the personal development and the trust between people.

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educational method:

- **Step 1:** | Introduction to the Johari Window theory |

Bring participants together to explain the tool, the differences between the squares and to give some examples to help them understand how it functions.

- **Step 2:** | Self-reflection and small trusting groups |

Ask participants to self-reflect on their personality and to choose between 5-10 words that they think best describes them. They can choose it from the "Johari adjectives" or give them space to bring their own adjectives.

able	clever	friendly	introverted	observant	religious	silly
accepting	complex	giving	kind	organized	responsive	spontaneous
adaptable	confident	happy	knowledgable	patient	searching	sympathetic
bold	dependable	helpful	logical	powerful	self-assertive	tense
brave	dignified	idealistic	loving	proud	self-conscious	trustworthy
calm	empathetic	independent	mature	quiet	sensible	warm
caring	energetic	ingenious	modest	reflective	sentimental	wise
cheerful	extroverted	intelligent	nervous	relaxed	shy	witty

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Once they choose, unite them in small groups, if possible, let them gather with people they trust or know, as this will become more effective for open communication.

- **Step 3:** | Ask your group for feedback |

In the small groups, participants need to ask their peers for the 5-10 words they think best describes them in their view. Each participant then will have their words (self-assessment) and the words of the Others (feedback).

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- **Step 4:** Building the window

  - Ask participants to place the common words selected by themselves and others in the "Open" square.
  - Ask participants to place words that only were selected by themselves in the "Hidden" square.
  - Ask participants to place words their peers selected but they didn't in the "Blind" square.
  - Ask participants to place the remaining words in the "Unknown" pane. Alternatively, they can choose to leave the "Blind" square empty.

- **Step 5:** Redraw the window and find the differences

Now participants can have a sense of how big their squares are, making them bigger or smaller depending on the number of words per square.

Ask them to reflect on their window:
  - How aligned are them with what they think they are and how others see them?
  - How open are you as a person?
  - Do you find any interesting spot?

- **Step 6:** Debriefing

  - How are you feeling after this exercise?
  - Was it hard to choose your adjectives? And to get them from other people?
  - How do you see your Open square?
  - Is there any surprise or something you did not expect in your Blind square?
  - How can feedback help you grow individually and as a group?
  - How can this tool help us build in our communication as a group or team?
  - What would you like to do after these discoveries?

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To close, motivate participants to start working on reframing their window, so it supports their group communications and personal self-awareness.

Most people aim to increase the size of their "Open" window and make the size of their other windows smaller. There are two main ways they do this. Firstly, they try being more open and transparent with others about how they think and feel. This increases the size of their open window and reduces the size of their hidden window.

Secondly they seek more feedback from others, which reduces the size of their "blind" window. Some people also look to reduce the size of their "unknown" window, though this can be more difficult. Doing this often requires investing some time in self-discovery and developing self awareness.

read more:

- **Website:** The Johari Window: A Helpful Interpersonal Awareness Tool. World of Work Project, July 2019

- **Book:** Of Human Interaction - The Johari Model. Joseph Luft. National Press, 1969

- **Podcast:** Understanding the Johari Window - Robot Voices Deep Dives (Apple Podcasts)

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