



# Information & Critical Thinking

If you want the decision maker you are trying to engage to be willing to work with you, it is important to build a relationship with them based on trust. One way you can help to build that trust is to bring reliable information and share it in a way that is easy to understand and useful to the decision maker. This checklist will help you begin that process.

**WATCH:** [Information in Critical Thinking \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#) (~2 minutes) (Youtube) which provides suggestions of things to keep in mind as you gather information that you'll share with decision makers.

As noted by Gary Meegan (2012) in the video *Information in Critical Thinking*, in order to be taken seriously by decision makers, it is important to gather information that is factual, reliable and logical. Information might include observations, experiences, statistics, stories, pictures, etc. Doing some research ahead of time and organizing it in a way that is easy to understand will help you go a long way to being seen as a subject matter resource.

Spending some time to think critically about your issue will help to avoid being seen as reactionary and helps you become a reliable subject matter resource. As you gather and review your information keep the following checklist (Paul & Elder, 1996) in mind:

## Checklist of Questions for Critical Thinking

- 1. Think about Purpose:**  
What is my purpose, goal, or agenda? (...on this project, at this meeting, in this discussion, etc)
- 2. State the Question:**  
What is the key question I am trying to answer?
- 3. Gather the Information:**  
What key information do I need to answer the question?
- 4. Check Your Inferences or Interpretations:**  
To what extent does my data support my inferences?
- 5. Clarify Your Concepts:**  
What key concepts or theories guide my reasoning? What alternative explanations might be possible, given these concepts and theories?
- 6. Question Your Assumptions:**  
What am I taking for granted or assuming? Am I justified in doing so?
- 7. Think Through the Implications and Consequences:**  
Given my reasoning thus far, what does my reasoning imply? If I act on these conclusions, what are the likely implications and consequences?
- 8. Understand Your Point of View:**  
What is my point of view? Should I consider an alternative point of view?