



**COMMON GROUND  
WEBINAR SERIES**

# **COMMON GROUND**

## **KEY TAKEAWAYS DOCUMENT**



**Project  
Management  
Institute.**

# Common Ground Webinar Series

Theme: Life skills/Professional development

SEASON 1 | EPISODE 4

## FEATURED SPEAKERS

### Session 1



**Suman Ghose**

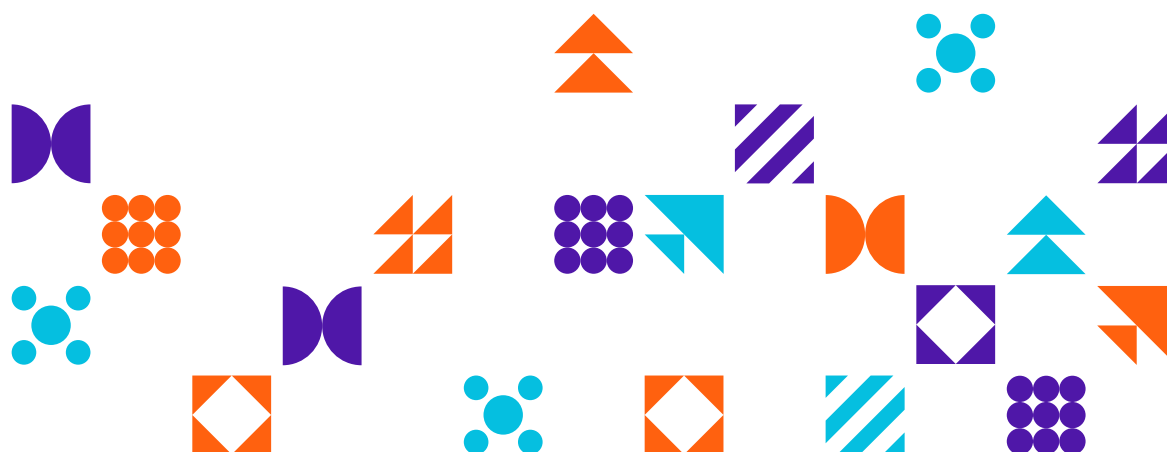
Co-founder  
Inroads Leadership Development

### Session 2



**Lt. Col. L. Shri Harsha**

(Retd.) PgMP, PMP  
Techno Legal Consultant &  
Technical Arbitrator



## Session 1: How to Remain Calm and Positive in a Lockdown



**Suman Ghose**, co-founder, Inroads Leadership Development, is the author of the best-selling book, *From Command to Empathy*. He has over two decades of experience in diverse areas including practice management, program and site management, and ERP consulting. Mr. Ghose collaborates with individuals and organizations to help them achieve maximum performance and meaningful growth on critical leadership skills.

### Summary

At a time when stress levels are rising, there is a need to understand why we behave in a certain manner in a given situation so that we can improve our response mechanism. Suman Ghose explored the neurological factors that contribute to anxiety and stress in people, and how different parts of the body react when stress hormones are released. Over time, increased stress could affect a person's health by increasing one's heartbeat and causing the liver to produce extra glucose.

However, individuals have the power to choose their response in the event of a crisis. Many of the techniques to overcome stress are classic examples of mind over matter. Mr. Ghose recommended a number of books that explore this subject such as *Man's Search for Meaning* and *The Power of Positive Thinking*.

He demonstrated a few simple exercises and breathing techniques to come out of stressful situations. Healing methods like yoga and meditation can reverse the effects of chronic stress. He strongly advocates mindfulness as a means to better manage one's emotions and guide teams during difficult times.



## Key takeaways:

- Acknowledge the knowing-doing gap: why we do the things we know we shouldn't do.
- Ask yourself “why” before making a choice; you will then be more committed to your choice.
- Fight vs flight response: control the speed at which your brain thinks and reacts, so you can respond better.
- Don't let yourself be emotionally hijacked; remove yourself from that situation.
- 60,000 thoughts invade our minds daily; stay mindful to reduce the number and get mental clarity.
- Between stimulus and response lies our power to make a choice.
- Retrain the brain to focus and relax through yoga and exercise.
- Remember to reflect on what you are grateful for today.

Fight vs flight response: control the speed at which your brain thinks and reacts, so you can respond better.



## Session 2: Stakeholder engagement – a juggler’s act



**Lt. Col. L. Shri Harsha**, (Retd.) PgMP, PMP, is a techno-legal consultant and technical arbitrator, with three decades of diverse experience across continents. His expertise spans different aspects of management ranging from program, project, contract, to stakeholder management. He is the second Indian to receive the prestigious PMI Eric Jenett Project Management Excellence Award in 2019. During his days in the Indian Army, he served in the frontline in Sri Lanka, Jammu & Kashmir, and Rajasthan.

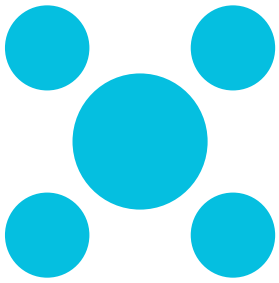
### Summary

As the session title suggests, managing stakeholders in today’s business environment involves multi-tasking and quick responses as the situation evolves. Mr. Shri Harsha covered stakeholder management in theory, reality, and practice. He shared insights on how project managers can understand the different types of challenges that arise with stakeholders and learn to manage them better.

He urged project managers to spot the signs of negativity in stakeholders, as he named different ‘negative stakeholder’ categories. “Instigators” is a category of internal stakeholders who may try to fish for information on project development and use it for personal gains. “Surprise-springer” is a category of external stakeholders who extract confidential information from someone in your team to put you down. While negativity is detrimental to the project and the rest of the team, deal with them with professionalism.

Team leaders cannot afford to ignore difficult stakeholders as they may scuttle their project. Broaden your knowledge so you can understand the technical aspects of the project when dealing with stakeholders who have different skills. Be aware of the highs and lows of stakeholder management, and arm yourself with the relevant knowledge and techniques to take all the stakeholders along.





## Key takeaways:

- Observe your stakeholders and get to know them better.
- Keep time aside for stakeholder planning.
- Behavioral analysis, professional excellence, and communication are key to tackling difficult stakeholders.
- Leave your comfort zone; communicate openly to get control over a situation.
- Be there for your team; create a good impression on your stakeholders.
- Take a stand when you must.
- Listen more and talk less.
- Don't burn your bridges; you never know who you will run into around the corner.

Behavioral analysis, professional excellence, and communication are key to tackling difficult stakeholders.

