

Introduction to Facilitation

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Introduction activity

Turn to a partner. Discuss:

- Why is facilitation is important to your work?
- Have you ever served as a facilitator?
- What do you hope to learn or be able to do better after this session?

Introduction activity

To the full group, introduce your partner with what you just learned!

**When and why do we need
a facilitator?**

Facilitation: what is it and why use it?

- Sometimes we need to have group discussions, with a goal to:
 - Explore ideas
 - Build common understanding of an issue or problem
 - Make a decision

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- Sometimes we need to have group discussions.
- Group discussions need structure and flow.
- Someone needs to manage the structure and flow.
- That person is the facilitator.

**What are the goals of
facilitation?**

Goals of Facilitation

- Help groups achieve their best potential through communication
- encourage:
 - full participation
 - mutual understanding
 - inclusive solutions
 - shared ownership
- help groups through tension and conflict

**So what does a facilitator
do?**

A facilitator is here to...

A facilitator is here to...

Help group set **ground rules**

- Ensure ground rules are shared and understood by the group
- Enforce ground rules that are shared by group, e.g.
 - Confidentiality
 - Queuing participants
 - Issues of courtesy / friendly space / brave space
 - Not make assumptions
 - How to address tension when it occurs
 - Create a “parking lot” for off topic ideas to come back to later
 - Sticking to time
- Though it may feel uncomfortable to you, the group will likely feel relief in seeing you enforce the agreements.

A facilitator is here to...

Understand the goals and needs of the group

- Who is present? Err on the side of caution: make introductions
- What do we want or need to address as a group?
- What can realistically be achieved?
- Who is in the room?
- Common goals
- Individual goals

A facilitator is here to...

Based on the goals, work with the group to set an agenda and structure the discussion.

- Understand the parameters of the discussion
- Structure discussion with in space-time continuum
- Ensure the group takes breaks. Honor that commitment.
- Consider available tools and techniques
- Expectations for renegotiation

A facilitator is here to...

Renegotiate the agenda throughout the discussion.

- Points of process
- Reminder of the ground rules
- Reviewing progress at regular intervals
- Adjusting goals and expectations
- Adjusting the structure of the discussions

A facilitator is here to...

Encourage full participation

- Create space for people to participate
- Enable participants to actively listen
- Keep participants engaged
- Create an environment of safety and support

How to encourage full participation?

people participate for two main reasons:

- They get value from the discussion
- They want to contribute to the discussion

A facilitator is here to...

Encourage progress in the discussion.

- Help the group keep the discussion on track toward achieving the goals they set.
- Employ different techniques and structures when progress is stalled or as distractions arise.

A facilitator is here to...

Work to get the group to have a shared understanding.

- The goal is not necessarily the same as reaching an agreement.
- Identify divergences and convergences.

A facilitator is here to...

Clarify thoughts and ideas

- Paraphrase.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Make connections between ideas.

Techniques

- A facilitator has many tools.
- Here's one: **paraphrasing**.

What is paraphrasing?

- Restate something someone else has said.
- Repeating the information with other words.
- Using different words from the original words to say the same thing.
 - Highlight points of tension or ambiguity in order to clarify
 - It's a little bit different from summarizing (summarizing is also a technique)

Why paraphrase?

- Paraphrasing helps people be and *feel* heard.
- It clarifies and ensures accuracy.
- It directs the discussion.
- It helps the facilitator manage the pace of the discussion.

Risks in paraphrasing

Be careful to:

- Leave out your own opinion or comment.
- Leave space for clarification.
- Accurately reflect the information.

Practical exercise

- Let's practice paraphrasing!

Facilitator techniques

- A facilitator has many tools.
- Here's another: different participation formats.
- So far, we have used two:
 - Large group discussion with a facilitator
 - Discussing in pairs
 - Structured go around, where every person shares
- Now we will try another!

Practical exercise



What did we learn?

- Go around the room and share one thing you learned and will implement

Highly Recommended Reading

*Facilitator's Guide to Participatory
Decision-Making*

by Sam Kaner et al., ISBN 1118404955

The End