

Facilitator Guidelines

The facilitator is a guide or discussion leader for the group. The process of facilitation is a way of providing leadership without taking the reins. A facilitative leader focuses on both content and process and provides tips for other facilitators, note takers, and time keepers.

Content: What is the issue, question or task that is being looked at?

Process: What is the group dynamic? What are the methods or procedures that will be most useful to keep the discussion moving forward?

What does a facilitator do?

- Pays attention to the time and the space
- Evokes participation and creativity
- Pays attention to the group dynamic: who talks, who isn't, taking turns
- Maintains ground rules of respect and tolerance for varying opinions
- Maintains personal integrity

Facilitator Characteristics

- Initiates conversation
- Asks for other's opinions rather than always having to offer their own
- Listens without interrupting
- Looks people in the eye when talking to them
- Keeps the big picture in mind
- Is naturally curious about people, ideas, and life in general
- Has a good understanding of the topic being discussed
- Is more like a coach than a sergeant

Participant Pitfalls

- Confusion about the topic
- Dislike for the topic or averse to the nature of the discussion
- Feelings of insecurity based on ability of others in the room
- Feelings of superiority over others in the room or over the facilitator
- Fear of speaking or sharing ideas in front of others

Facilitator Best Practices

- Listen actively
- Ask questions
- Check for common understanding of terms and definitions
- Track discussions
- Summarize
- Use appropriate language
- Take some notes

Communication between Facilitators (if more than one)

- Ask for help if you need it
- Clearly establish the division of labor between you and your partner
- Check in with each other often

Agenda Generator

Ice Breaker:

Ask people their name and your ice breaker question; go around the table and listen to answers.

Ice Breaker Question:

Agenda Items:

Don't forget to ask participants if they have any additional agenda items.

Conversation Starter:

A conversation starter creates dialogue between you and the participants. Starters can be elusive and hard to think of and without them you can be left with awkward silence. A good starter is not a yes or no question but encourages participants to think and engage in the answer.

1. What do you already know about _____?
2. What do you want to know more about? _____
3. What interested you about this club? _____
4. What is already happening at school around _____?
5. Brainstorm related to an agenda item. _____

End:

Share an interesting thing that you heard in the conversation and give everyone a take away.

Set the next meeting.

Acknowledge to your team what has been accomplished in the meeting and thank them for their participation.

Follow Up: The note taker should send a follow-up email or text with the task list of what individuals have committed to and when, and a reminder of the next meeting date, time, and location.