

Facilitator Role & Function

The facilitator is responsible for the process of the meeting — how the participants work together. The facilitator should be neutral and non-evaluating. The facilitator should encourage the participants to use the most effective methods for accomplishing their task in the shortest amount of time.

ROLE

Your role is to capture the ideas, concerns, feelings and questions of the group. You are NOT responsible for answering specific questions. Facilitators should interact with the group.

You are expected to:

- Set a positive tone for discussion
- Record information or supervise its recording (complete thoughts, please)
- Remain neutral to the issues
- Keep the group focused
- Keep track of time
- Suggest methods and procedures that can help the group work better
- Encourage participation by everyone
- Educate/Inform participants about activities and steps
- Protect ideas from challenge so everyone's ideas can be discussed

SET THE CLIMATE

Your opening remarks will set the tone of the session. As the facilitator, remember to: Clarify the purpose and what the expected outcomes of the meeting

- Introduce yourself and the role you will play
- Explain the agenda, ground rules and any handouts. Groups quickly establish norms, so introduce the Ground Rules as a contract of respect, not a list of rules. Invite the participants to give examples.

GUIDE THE PROCESS

- The facilitator's role is to guide the discussion and act as "air traffic manager" during the session.
- Ask your group to try to reach a group consensus in responding to your group's activities. Consensus is not voting but discussing solutions until each group member can agree, in spirit, with the conclusions. Sometimes, this may not be possible.
- Small groups like the one you will be leading usually have a task to complete and will need someone to help keep the group on task and on time. That's you.
- Explain that you will put questions that cannot be answered by the group on a "Parking Lot" sheet and bring them back to the large group.
- The facilitator will label each large sheet with your group's number at the top
- Present the questions and encourage everyone to talk.
- If one person begins to dominate the session, the facilitator should intercede and bring the session back to a group discussion. Refer to the Ground Rules.

CONFLICT FACILITATION

- Dealing with conflict means that you may need to intervene.

- Here are some things for your group to consider

1. Whose problem is this?
2. Who can solve it? Is the group needed?
3. Do the people having the conflict agree that that they want to try to solve the problem?

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TRYING TO SOLVE A CONFLICT

1. Do the people experiencing a conflict agree that they can solve this problem without outside help at this time?
2. Are the right people at the table, e.g. the people with the problem, not on-lookers?
3. Is this the right time to deal with it?
4. Is this the right place?

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TRYING TO SOLVE A CONFLICT

1. How can this become a win/win situation for everyone?
2. What outcome or result does each person want from this conflict?
3. What can be done to improve the situation if the people involved don't want to deal with the problem?

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TRYING TO SOLVE A CONFLICT

- What is negotiable?
- What is non-negotiable?
- What am I feeling?
- Why I am feeling this way?
- Who is angry? Why?

REPORT BACK

- At the end of the session summarize the major points recorded during the discussion
- Bring your group report back to the trainers
- Remind group to fill out evaluations and bring back to the trainers